

PIERRE BAYLE, TOLERATION AND HISTORY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

*J. J. Bashmore.*

PIERRE BAYLE, TOLERATION AND HISTORY

"A study of the influence of Bayle's  
defence of toleration on the idea of  
history expressed in the Dictionnaire  
historique et critique".

by

John Cashmere, B.A., Dip. Ed.

Submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

HOBART

JUNE 1969



*Dessiné par G. Jacquand*

BAYLE.

*Gravé par G. Leclerc*



PREFACE

The intention of this present study is to examine Pierre Bayle in his context as an historian rather than a philosopher. The purpose of the thesis will be to analyse the influence exerted upon his idea of history by the arguments which he advanced in defence of toleration in the Dictionnaire historique et critique. I shall attempt to show that while his idea of history remained essentially seventeenth century in character, the demands of his defence of toleration led him to make certain departures from the traditional seventeenth century concept of history, and that in doing so he reached conclusions which represented the beginnings of a dramatic metamorphosis in French historical thought.

The fact that until recently Bayle has been viewed primarily as a philosopher has tended to overshadow his abilities as an historian. The title of "le philosophe de Rotterdam" which has been bestowed upon him seems to ignore the fact that while at the "Ecole Illustre" he held the post of "professeur en philosophie et en histoire". Moreover, this pre-occupation with his capacity as a philosopher has proved an obstacle to a satisfactory understanding of his meaning and intentions in the Dictionnaire. All too often the encyclopaedic nature of this work has encouraged scholars to examine its various subjects in isolation without attempting to discern any overall relationship between them. If, however,

we regard Bayle's motives as having been primarily propagandist rather than philosophical, then the arguments of the Dictionnaire begin to assume a new unity. If viewed in the light of his concern to defend religious toleration, his discussion of such subjects as the origin of evil, manichaeism, natural morality, biblical criticism, philosophical and religious scepticism and the relationship between faith and reason assume a new importance. They will be found to contribute not only essential arguments towards his defence of toleration, but also to produce numerous historical assumptions, which when gathered together, reflect the nature and character of his idea of history.

In limiting this study to an analysis of the Dictionnaire, I was guided by considerations of length. Bayle wrote a great deal during his lifetime and the Dictionnaire alone contains in its four folio volumes well over two thousand articles comprising the text and closely printed double columns of critical footnotes. This work, however, can be said to represent the culmination of Bayle's thought, and apart from being one of his most controversial publications, it exercised perhaps a greater influence upon the eighteenth century than any of his other writings. In addition, much of the controversy concerning his alleged scepticism has tended to centre around several of the more important articles in the Dictionnaire. I feel, therefore, that this encyclopaedic work is sufficiently representative of Bayle's thought for the conclusions reached in this thesis to be of general significance.

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude for the advice and assistance offered by Professor Ian Smith during all stages of my work on this thesis. His patience, understanding and encouragement, both in personal discussion and correspondence, have sustained me throughout the duration of my labours. My gratitude must also go to the staffs of the libraries of the Universities of Tasmania and Exeter for the ready assistance they have provided in securing microfilms and books which would otherwise have been inaccessible to me. In addition, I should like to thank Dr. Norma Perry of the Department of French, Exeter, for the many discussion we have had about the activities and ideas of seventeenth century Huguenots in England and Holland. Finally, mention must be made of Professor Gordon Rimmer and my erstwhile colleagues in Tasmania who were always willing to lend a sympathetic ear to my problems and were prepared to offer advice and criticism wherever possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Frontispiece . . . . .	iv
Preface . . . . .	v
I. Toleration, History and the <u>Dictionnaire</u> . . . . .	1
II. Persecution, Monarchical Absolutism and the Moral Purpose of History . . . . .	21
III. Persecution and the Role of Man in Causation . . . . .	55
IV. Toleration, Religious Orthodoxy and the Secularization of History. . . . .	103
V. Toleration, Truth and Historical Criticism . . . . .	147
VI. Conclusion . . . . .	182
Appendix A . . . . .	192
Index of articles cited from the <u>Dictionnaire</u> . . . . .	196
Bibliography . . . . .	199



## CHAPTER I

### TOLERATION, HISTORY AND THE DICTIONNAIRE

On September 17th., 1697 Bayle answered Pierre Jurieu's criticisms of the Dictionnaire historique et critique<sup>1</sup> by remarking "En un mot, tout ce que j'ai fait se trouve enfermé dans le ressort ou dans la juridiction d'un Ecrivain, qui donne une Histoire accompagnée d'un Commentaire Critique."<sup>2</sup> This was no idle boast, for in fact the Dictionnaire may best be described as a monumental work of history devoted in its critical footnotes, to the propagation of the theme of universal religious toleration. What makes this work unique is that two elements are fused together in its footnotes: it is at one and the same time a work of historical scholarship and a disjointed polemical treatise. It will be the purpose of this study to demonstrate that through the reaction of these two aspects of the Dictionnaire upon one another, Bayle

- 
- 1 On the whole, the abbreviated title Dictionnaire will be used throughout the rest of this study. Quotations in the text and citations in the footnotes of this thesis are taken from my own copy of the Dictionnaire historique et critique, quatrième édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée avec la vie de l'auteur par Mr. Des Maizeaux. 4 vols. Amsterdam & Leyden, 1730. The spelling in this edition has been followed for all quotations. The citation of Bayle's own footnotes is made according to the title of the article, which is capitalized (e.g. BEAULIEU), and the alphabetical letter of the note (e.g. note B).
  - 2 "Suite des réflexions sur le prétendu jugement du public", Dictionnaire. IV, p.660.

produced an implicit philosophy of history which, although profoundly seventeenth century in character, included certain assumptions which provided a basis for the growth of the modern approach to history.

It is not commonly agreed, even to-day, that Bayle did develop a philosophy of history. In 1963, H. T. Mason wrote "When a philosophy of history was required, Bayle had little advice to give, and Voltaire, like the eighteenth century in general, had painfully to elaborate and systematize his outlook as well as his times would permit."<sup>3</sup> Although "philosophes" like Montesquieu, Diderot, d'Holbach and Voltaire did elaborate and systematize Bayle's ideas, they misunderstood his fundamental meaning and intention, for they regarded the Dictionnaire as an arsenal of sceptical and anti-religious arguments with which to attack the traditional representatives of authority in the eighteenth century: the Church and the Monarchy. Bayle's own horizons did not extend as far as this. His goal was simply and solely to establish universal religious toleration and preserve religious peace. Nevertheless, whether he intended it or not, we are bound to acknowledge that Bayle's Dictionnaire exercised a profound influence upon the principal philosophical movement of the eighteenth century,<sup>4</sup> which in turn has

---

3 H. T. Mason, Pierre Bayle and Voltaire. London: O.U.P., 1963, p.133. Apart from Mason, both Ernst Cassirer and Alfred Cobban adopted this view.

4 See Walter Rex, Essays on Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, p. 201, where he remarks "It is possible that, historically, the main interest of Bayle's article [DAVID] lies in the use the 'philosophes' made of it in the Enlightenment; perhaps, indeed, from one point of view, their interpretation - whether right or wrong - is the important one to remember."

influenced modern readings of Bayle. This fact was clearly summed up in 1959 by Paul Dibon who, as editor of a book commemorating the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Bayle's death, wrote:

"Il y a un mythe de Bayle, tenace parce qu'il est commode. Il consiste à imaginer un Bayle sceptique, un Bayle déjà voltairien sous prétexte que son Dictionnaire Historique et Critique servit d'arsenal polémistes des générations suivantes. Au lieu de le lire et de le replacer dans son temps, on trouve plus facile de le voir à travers ses successeurs, mieux connus, et de lui prêter les positions plus tranchées que prit la 'philosophie' après lui."<sup>5</sup>

Mason's remark is a reflection of this myth which was re-affirmed as recently as 1965 when Richard A. Popkin remarked of the Dictionnaire: "This work is really a Summa Sceptica that deftly undermined all the foundations of the seventeenth century intellectual world."<sup>6</sup>

Despite such recent perpetuations of the myth, there has been since 1952 as effort on the part of some scholars to reject the notion of a sceptical and irreligious Bayle by re-reading his works in the light of his times and milieu. In England W. H. Barber and E. D. James, in France Elisabeth Labrousse and Jacques Solé and in the United States Walter Rex, Craig Brush and K. C. Sandberg have all undertaken studies of a Bayle placed in his seventeenth century rather than his eighteenth century context. Mme Labrousse, however, is the only scholar who has acknowledged the fact that Bayle may have developed a

---

5 Paul Dibon (ed.), Pierre Bayle, le philosophe de Rotterdam, études et documents. Amsterdam & Paris: Elsevier & Vrin, 1959, p.viii.

6 Pierre Bayle, Historical and Critical Dictionary, Selections, Trans. by the editor, Richard A. Popkin, with the assistance of Craig Brush, Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965, p.XII.

genuine philosophy of history.<sup>7</sup> It is in the spirit of this re-evaluation, therefore, that this present study will, as well as outlining Bayle's philosophy of history, also attempt to demonstrate that it reflects a mind which was undoubtedly humanist, sincerely Calvinist, profoundly royalist and fully steeped in both the old and new traditions of seventeenth century historiography.

Of all his works, it is perhaps the Dictionnaire which contributed most to the classical image of Bayle, the sceptic and anti-religious critic, and it is probably its unusual encyclopaedic form which is responsible for this myth. Since Bayle chose on this occasion to present his ideas on toleration in encyclopaedic form rather than in the subjective coherence of a rational treatise, his meaning was open to misconstruction. The "philosophes" conveniently ignored or unwittingly missed any coherent purpose which might have bound Bayle's ideas together. They could disregard his unflinching royalism, his re-affirmation of traditional Calvinist theology and his support for the fundamental framework of seventeenth century historiography as long as they were free to seek in his footnotes arguments in support of scepticism, anti-religious criticism or almost any form of attack on traditional authority. They were not the only ones to bypass the essential unity of the Dictionnaire,

---

7 See Elisabeth Labrousse, Pierre Bayle. 2 vols., The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, II, Heterodoxie et Rigorisme, particularly chap.15, "La philosophie de l'Histoire". pp.449-73.



for even the late Alfred Cobban referred to it as "monstrous and unclassifiable."<sup>8</sup>

Because of its size and nature, the Dictionnaire presents problems in assessing Bayle's true meaning and purpose. In four massive folio volumes we find an apparently random selection of articles dealing in the main with individuals, sects and towns, many of them remarkably obscure and apparently insignificant. To most of these articles are appended long and diverse footnotes discussing almost everything from history, philosophy and theology to errors, miracles and scandals. It is this diversity in the Dictionnaire which has provoked so much controversy amongst those who have written on Bayle. For example, the dispute over the manner in which Bayle resolved the faith-reason issue has tended to centre around half a dozen or so articles, particularly BEAULIEU, PYRRHON and ZENON. It has frequently been assumed that because Bayle exercised no apparent discrimination in the selection of his articles, it is impossible to discern any essential unity in the work. Historians have asserted that his choice of subjects was entirely arbitrary and one writer at least has voiced despair at the absence of any continuity of historical theme in the Dictionnaire.<sup>9</sup>

---

8 Alfred Cobban, In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History. London: Jonathan Cape, 1960, p. 105.

9 P.J.S. Whitmore, "The use made of English thought and history in the works of Pierre Bayle, with special reference to the Dictionnaire". M.A. thesis, University of London, 1952, p. 30.

When scholars seek the cohesive character of a rational treatise in this work, they must inevitably be disappointed. Nevertheless, a close examination of the Dictionnaire will show that the apparently random selection of articles is perhaps not as random as appears at first sight. To begin with, Bayle's original motive for undertaking the work should not be ignored. Initially he set out with the intention of correcting the faults which he had discovered in Louis Moreri's Grand Dictionnaire Historique,<sup>10</sup> but he gradually found himself expanding this plan to include an encyclopaedic correction of the errors to be found in all dictionaries, and even more "Je me suis mis en tête de compiler le plus gros Recueil qu'il me sera possible des Fautes qui se rencontrent dans les Dictionnaires & de ne me pas renfermer dans ces espaces, quelque vastes qu'ils soient, mais de faire aussi courses sur toutes sortes d'Auteurs, quand l'occasion s'en présentera."<sup>11</sup> Even though he expanded this plan again to include a widely dispersed treatise on toleration, Bayle's Dictionnaire nevertheless bore the indelible imprint of his original design. Of the two thousand and thirty eight articles included in its volumes, more than eighty percent of them correspond to articles in Moreri's dictionary.<sup>12</sup> Whatever its final purpose,

---

10 Louis Moreri, Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange Curieux de l'Histoire Sainte et Profane, 1674.

11 "Dissertation qui fut imprimée au devant de quelques Essais ou Fragmens de cet Ouvrage l'an MDCXCII, sous le Titre de Projet d'un Dictionnaire Critique, à Mr. du Rondel, Professeur aux belles Lettres à Maestricht", Dictionnaire. IV, p.606, in future referred to simply as "Projet".

12 For the purpose of this comparison, the second edition of Moreri's dictionary (published by Parayre at Lyon, 1681, 2 vols.) was used.

Bayle's work owed its encyclopaedic form to its somewhat less illustrious predecessor.

We still have to account, however, for the basis on which Bayle did make his selection of articles, for he by no means discussed all the subjects treated by Moreri. The answer to this problem, while not completely definitive, is quite straightforward. After all, Bayle originally set out to correct the errors in Moreri's work, so it is not unlikely that he should treat subjects where his own knowledge would permit him to discern errors. As a child he had studied Greek and Latin, his family and religious background had familiarized him with the Bible though he knew little Hebrew, and through his work on the Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, he was well versed in the history, philosophy and literature of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A recent study by Jacques Solé<sup>13</sup> confirms my own conclusion that Bayle's articles correspond closely to his own knowledge and interests. Articles in the Dictionnaire fall into three clear categories: biblical and classical antiquity up to the fifth century (approximately 28% of the total); the Middle Ages from the sixth to the fourteenth centuries (approximately 6% of the total)<sup>14</sup> and what for Bayle was the modern period of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (approximately 66% of the total). Significantly, of the one hundred and twenty four articles devoted

---

13 Jacques Solé, "Religion et vision historiographique dans le Dictionnaire de Bayle", in Religion, Erudition et Critique à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup>. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, pp.122-27.

14 Solé in fact includes the fifteenth century in the Middle Ages, making articles devoted to this period 11.77% of the total.

to the Middle Ages, only forty fall within the range from the sixth to the eleventh centuries, and these include, among others, articles such as MAHOMET, ALPAIDE, ABDERAME, DAMASCENE, ACHMET, PAPESSE, PAULICIENS and EMMA which all contributed passages to his defence of toleration. Clearly then, Bayle's choice of articles was conditioned first by the range of articles which Moreri treated and secondly, within that range, by those subjects for which his knowledge would allow him to speak with some authority. While this does not fully account for Bayle's obvious love of trivia, it assists in dispelling the suggestions that he selected his articles entirely at random.

Although it is doubtful that Bayle can be considered a direct precursor of the "philosophes" of the Enlightenment, his ideas on the nature of history and its methods must command a significant place in the evolution of French historical thought, if only because his Dictionnaire was a work which sooner or later found its way to the shelves of all important eighteenth century libraries. In fact the initial publication of this work in two folio volumes in October 1696,<sup>15</sup> must surely come close to

---

15 There is some confusion about the date of this first edition. Henri-F. Bergeron places it in November, 1697, with the first volume having been printed in 1695. (See "Le manichéisme de Bayle et Plutarque", in XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, no.68, 1965, p.45). Elisabeth Labrousse places it on October 24th, 1699. (See Pierre Bayle, Oeuvres Diverses, with an introduction by Elisabeth Labrousse, 3 vols., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966, III, p.XV.). Most other authors claim that it was published in 1697, including Alexandre Cioranescu in the Bibliographie de la littérature française du dix-septième siècle. 3 vols., Paris: Editions du Centre National de la recherche scientifique, 1966, I, p.309. I have



the focal point of that vortex of ideas which Professor Hazard has called "la crise de la conscience européenne".<sup>16</sup> It is important to understand this in order to fully appreciate the contribution which Pierre Bayle made to the idea of history in this work. The period which Hazard describes, from 1680 to 1715, was one of intense intellectual ferment and one which, he suggests, contains the key to the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, or more generally from the medieval to the modern world. The nature of this transition, as far as history at least was concerned, was outlined in a challenging book published in 1932 by the American historian, Carl Becker.<sup>17</sup> According to Becker, thirteenth century theology represented in works like the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, provided men of that time with an authentic philosophy of history based upon the story of man and his world viewed according to the divine plan of salvation. This scheme was essentially a denial of progress, and the very nature of medieval society confirmed that man was more interested in his relationship with God than with his fellow man. By the nineteenth

---

accepted Mme. Labrousse's opinion, for apart from the obvious scholarship upon which it rests, Bayle himself speaks of the work being on sale in bookshops in December, 1696. (See "Suite des réflexions sur le prétendu jugement du public", Dictionnaire, IV. p.662.).

16 Paul Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680-1715. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.

17 Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers. Yale Paperbound, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

century, however, history had usurped the traditional role of theology, for in the process of replacing the search for divine salvation with the search for material progress, man had developed a concept of history which could be described most simply as "philosophy teaching by example".

In the terms of Becker's thesis, Bayle's idea of history straddled the medieval and the modern worlds, for on the one hand he had a cyclical view of history which denied progress and included a considerable deterministic role for Providence. On the other hand, through his re-examination of the fundamentals of biblical criticism and his re-definition of "truth", Bayle was able to cut the Gordian knot which had bound history for so long to theology. The eighteenth century may have misunderstood Bayle's intention in the Dictionnaire, but it fully appreciated the significance of his ethical criticism of the Bible and the value of his principles of historical criticism.

To a considerable extent, Bayle's discussion of history in the Dictionnaire presumed an acceptance, in its broad framework, of the seventeenth century humanist philosophy of history. This philosophy, which had its origins in the writings of men like Paul-Emile<sup>18</sup> during the high Renaissance period of fifteenth century Italy, was an extension of medieval historical philosophy. History was very much a literary genre

---

18 See Antoine Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: la fin de l'école classique, 1680-1715. Paris: Editions Mondiales, 1962, pp.328-29.

in which Providence still commanded a considerable, if not absolute, deterministic role, and the purpose of history was seen to be the provision of historical examples which would implicitly teach moral or political lessons.<sup>19</sup> The humanists selected the classical historians as their guides, and modelling themselves on these ancients, sought to produce historical works which were primarily of literary value. The originally high ideals of the Italian humanists, however, soon became distorted. Becker remarked of history in the seventeenth century "We find then humanists 'exploiting the past' in the interests of classical learning, patriots in the interests of national or royal prestige, Protestants in the interests of the new religion, Catholics in the interests of the old faith."<sup>20</sup> History had become a weapon of polemic in which the standards of historical scholarship were sacrificed to prejudice and self-interest. It was against this infusion of intolerance and prejudice into historical scholarship that Bayle reacted most forcefully. He witnessed humanists like Mézeray, Saint-Réal and Vertot striving for dramatic and literary effect at the expense of factual accuracy, Protestant historians uncritically extolling the virtues of the Reformation, while Catholics such as Maimbourg, Sarrasin and Bossuet filled their histories with heranques against the Protestants. Not only

---

19 See Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p.105.

20 Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers, p.90.

had history fallen into the abysmal depths of factual inaccuracy, but it had also become a battleground for the passions, emotions and religious prejudices of historians themselves.

In part as a reaction to these tendencies, in the second half of the seventeenth century two new movements emerged which provided Bayle with the inspiration for some of the techniques which he used in arguing his defence of toleration. The first of these movements, the spirit of historical criticism employed by the "erudites", arose as a direct reaction to the declining standards of humanist scholarship. A group of new historians, men like Duchesne, Baluze, Montfaucon, Mabillon and the Benedictines of Saint-Maur, interested themselves in new historical techniques, delving into chronology, archaeology, palaeography, numismatics and diplomatics. French, Italian and German scholars began plunging into the study of coins, inscriptions, deeds, charters and other non-literary documents which had been ignored or neglected by the humanists. The Jesuit Hardouin made an extensive study of coins and inscriptions, while in England, John Horsley of Morpeth in Northumberland undertook a systematic collection of Roman inscriptions. In France the Cartesian Tillemont published a work in which he attempted to reconcile the varying accounts of Roman history presented by accepted authorities, while the Bollandists undertook a critical re-appraisal of the lives of the saints. This spirit of historical criticism was widespread and became a movement in which accuracy and verification soon replaced literary excellence as the motivating forces



behind historical scholarship.

The second movement, which flourished during the decade 1680-90, relates to the growth of a spirit of historical pyrrhonism closely associated with the development of biblical exegesis. It was not altogether separate from the previous movement, for in fact the conclusions of many of the "erudites" amounted to a situation of historical pyrrhonism, if only because of many of their efforts to verify historical facts had proved fruitless. Most of the "erudites" were reluctant to adopt the radical stand of the historical pyrrhonists, but among those who did were Papebroek, Mabillon, Levesque de Pouilly, Richard Simon and Spinoza. These men were convinced that where historical facts could not be proven by substantive evidence, the best situation to be hoped for was one of enduring doubt. While this stand had far reaching implications for secular history, it had perhaps its most profound effect on biblical scholarship. By the time the Dictionnaire was published, Tillemont, Simon and others had already been busy at the task of biblical exegesis. It seemed that the Bible, which for centuries had been regarded as the primary historical document, was the least capable of verification by substantive evidence. All the new techniques of historical scholarship were of little avail in proving the authenticity of biblical facts, and when Bayle came to approach the subject in the Dictionnaire the Spinozists were already denying the substance of biblical miracles.<sup>21</sup>

---

21 SPINOZA, note R.

When he came to compose the footnotes to the Dictionnaire, Bayle was already quite single minded about the question of religious toleration. He had exercised considerable effort in arguing the validity of this principle in previous works, and between the publication of the Commentaire philosophique and the appearance of the Dictionnaire he had engaged Pierre Jurieu in a bitter controversy over this very point.<sup>22</sup> By the mid-1690's his ideas had crystallized somewhat and he had already repudiated his previous reliance on Cartesian philosophy. As a medium in which to argue the case for religious toleration, the Dictionnaire presented new advantages. In a way which had not been possible before, Bayle could now muster all the evidence of history, as well as its techniques, to support his call for universal religious toleration. As a critical historian, he was free to draw his lessons from historical examples as well as substantiating them through the new techniques of historical criticism and historical pyrrhonism. Even armed with such weapons, his task was not easy. Arguments for toleration were not new and he recognised this. The decade or so since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had been filled with polemics on toleration, including his own, and the case could be traced back to Jean Bodin, Castellio and beyond. To make his arguments tenable, Bayle

---

22 See Guy Howard Dodge, The Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Dispersion, with special reference to the thought and influence of Pierre Jurieu. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947, chap.7, pp.198-228.

had to seek out the very foundations upon which intolerance in religion was based, and it was precisely this task which he set about in the footnotes of the Dictionnaire.

In the following chapters we shall examine four of the principal aspects of Bayle's defence of toleration, each of which either reflected or influenced his philosophy of history. Bayle's primary trait was the fact that he genuinely loved to argue, and nowhere did he better display his talent for this than in the Dictionnaire. There he could effectively dwell on almost any aspect of his defence of toleration without the inhibition of having to relate it to any overall subjective pattern. He could bring his opponents into the open by quoting extensively from their works and could refute their arguments more subtly than he might have done in a straightforward polemic. Even his readers were affected by this approach for they imbibed his arguments almost without thinking. Under ETMA, for example, they would find arguments supporting absolute monarchy; under ESOPE and incidental remark of the nature of history; or under EUCLIDE a discussion of the dangers of controversy. Wherever the opportunity presented itself, Bayle would add a new argument to support his theory.

The first aspect of his defence of toleration, his attack on the revival of Huguenot theories of resistance, reflected his dependence upon the humanist idea of the moral purpose of history. Convinced as he was that religious toleration could only be consonant with political

stability, Bayle saw in the revival of the Huguenot theories of resistance after the Revocation a direct threat to the existing political order in France under Louis XIV's absolute monarchy. He firmly believed that history, when accurately reported, would implicitly underline the moral validity of toleration. Using the French Wars of Religion as his primary illustration, he drew two important moral lessons from history. Against rebellious Huguenots and ultramontanist Catholics he argued that since wise sovereigns acted more generally from political rather than religious motives, the secular sword could not fail but to be brought down on the heads of subjects who expressed disloyalty to their king, even for religious reasons. Against sovereigns who acted, in their folly, on the advice of ecclesiastical advisers his argument was that they sacrificed political wisdom for religious zeal, and in consequence had their power reduced and exposed their domains to political anarchy.

The second aspect of his defence of toleration, his attack on arguments which excused persecution by appealing to Providential favour, raised the whole question of historical causation. His intention was not to deny Providential determinism completely. Instead he broadly followed the Machiavellian view which divided causation equally between God and Man. The idea that Providence invariably protected and sanctioned the behaviour of the orthodox virtually absolved individuals or sects from any personal responsibility

in the persecution of heretics. Bayle observed that in their efforts to establish their orthodoxy, it was a common practice for religious sects to invoke Providential favour to justify their victories and testify to their orthodoxy while at the same time they pointed to the punishment of God for heresy signified in the defeat of their enemies. This amounted simply to a question of might justifying right, and provided a ready excuse for religious persecution. In an attempt to discredit such fallacious reasoning and to emphasise each man's personal culpability in persecution, Bayle was obliged to go to the very heart of causation. His answer to the problem involved an examination of those theological questions upon which the whole matter rested: Providential determinism itself, free-will and the origin of evil.

The third aspect of his defence of toleration, his condemnation of the principle of religious orthodoxy, turned his attention to the problem of biblical interpretation. It is interesting to note that his attack on controversy in religion bears a remarkable resemblance to the ideas advanced by Sebastian Castellio in his Traité des heretiques (1554).<sup>23</sup> Bayle began with the premise that doctrinal controversies were the fundamental origin of all religious persecutions, that the excessive pursuit of orthodoxy was responsible for turning Christians

---

23 For a discussion of Castellio's views on toleration see Joseph Lecler, Toleration and the Reformation. Trans. by T. L. Westow, 2 vols., New York & London: Associated Press and Longmans, 1960, I, pp.336-47.

against one another. Dogma, the focal point of all such controversies was rather the enemy of, than a statement of, the truth. It was not the result of inadvertent ignorance, but of a self-perpetuating delusion of the intellect. Heresy, the antithesis of orthodoxy, more often than not simply represented the beliefs held by one's religious adversary. All sects freely accused each other of heresy without ever attempting to identify the fundamental truths of religion. When examined properly, heresy was not as easy thing to identify in religion. In morality it was less difficult for all men had a common notion of natural morality, and if one man stubbornly persisted in contradicting the light of moral conscience, he could be justifiably accused of heresy. In religion, however, there were few truths on which men could agree, except for the existence of God and the divinity of the Bible, and the only legitimate proof for these was moral demonstration (the doctrine of probability) which could not provide absolute certainty. Only faith could provide the absolute certainty essential for religious truths. But faith was a gift from God, and could not be instilled in men by force. If a heretic should refuse, according to the light of his conscience, to accept moral demonstration as a proof for the divinity of the Bible, then reason was on his side, and under no circumstances could he be forcefully coerced to embrace any particular faith.

This whole argument had considerable importance for the question of biblical criticism. When he rested the proof for the

divinity of the Scriptures on the evidence of faith, Bayle concluded that if the Holy Ghost passed explicit judgment on biblical accounts, then they must unquestioningly be accepted by the faithful as revealed truths. Where, however, no explicit judgment was made, it was necessary to test the accuracy of biblical accounts according to the principles of natural morality. In other words, Bayle advanced the principle of ethical criticism,<sup>24</sup> in cases where biblical facts were not clearly revealed, and in so doing allowed the critical historian a free hand to examine certain aspects of the Bible without the risk of profaning sacred theology. What in fact he did was to draw a clear division between the realms of history and theology, freeing history for the first time from its bondage to St. Augustine's De Civitate Dei.

The final aspect of Bayle's defence of toleration, his attack on those religious prejudices which blinded men in their pursuit to truth, focuses attention on his historical method. As an argument against persecution it follows logically from the previous point, for that same ignorance which caused men to identify as heresy everything which disagreed with their own beliefs also impaired their ability to discover genuine truth. It was with increasing alarm that Bayle observed these

---

24 See Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment. (German edition, Die Philosophie der Aufklärung, Tübingen; J. C. B. Mohr, 1932). Trans. by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951, pp.167-68.

very passions and prejudices at work in the historians of his own time, men whose religious, national or dynastic loyalties caused them to suppress, alter or exaggerate facts as it suited the interest of their cause. To remedy this he drew up a new charter of truth which represented the final stage in the complete separation of history from theology. For Bayle, truth fell into three categories: philosophical truth which relied upon metaphysical demonstration and reason, theological truth which relied upon moral demonstration and faith, and historical truth which relied solely upon physical demonstration. By distinguishing between these three areas of truth, Bayle was able to establish a set of principles through which the critical historian could continually strive to eradicate his prejudice, control his passions and devote himself solely to the search for objective historical truth.

When it came to a philosophy of history, Bayle did in fact have a great deal to offer. If he followed closely the traditional pattern of seventeenth century humanist concepts of history, this was only because Bayle himself was essentially a seventeenth century figure. Unlike the "philosophes" who followed him, and who so clearly misinterpreted his meaning, his target was not the traditional authority of the Church and the monarchy. He was concerned solely to condemn religious prejudice in all its forms, whether displayed by pastors, priests, kings or historians. His only goal was universal religious peace. Nevertheless, in seeking this goal, he reached conclusions which represented for history the beginnings of a dramatic metamorphosis.



## CHAPTER II

### ABSOLUTISM AND THE MORAL PURPOSE OF HISTORY

Living, as we are, in the apparent sophistication of the twentieth century historical world, Bayle's idea of the purpose of history may seem to us somewhat naïve. In an historical milieu which by and large no longer believes in the utilitarian and moral value of history, or in the ultimate attainment of absolute historical truth, the notion that history has a definite moral purpose and a platform of established, historical facts would seem completely untenable. Nevertheless, this is how Bayle saw history in the seventeenth century: as the objective pursuit of truth; as the sword wielded by the sovereign for the pronouncement of moral judgments on the memory of historical figures; and finally, as the means whereby the reading public could be made more circumspect in the use of their judgment. But this is merely the theory of the purpose of history. In the footnotes of the Dictionnaire, Bayle used history for a much more practical and immediate purpose: to lay the foundations for his defence of toleration, which serves to show how firmly his ideas on

history were derived from his seventeenth century background. But let us begin by considering the purpose of history in theory.

Bayle originally envisaged the Dictionnaire as representing "La Chambre des Assûrances de la République des Lettres".<sup>1</sup> The errors of historians could be discovered everywhere, and he was convinced that their correction could have considerable value: "Or que sauroit-on imaginer de plus propre à bien faire comprendre à l'homme le néant & la vanité des Sciences, & la foiblesse de son Esprit, que de lui montrer à tas & à piles les Faussetez de fait dont les Livres sont remplis?"<sup>2</sup> The seventeenth century had begun to feel its strength in science, and Bayle was appalled by the arrogance which this prompted in men. "La Science enfle,"<sup>3</sup> he added with scorn, and man grew steadily more vain in his new researches into science and knowledge. It would be of no small service, if his Dictionnaire could lay bare the profusion of errors into which man's efforts in learning still betrayed him: "Ces volumes peuvent donc mortifier l'homme du côté de sa plus grande vanité, c'est-à-dire, du

---

1 "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.606. In CONCINI, note G. Bayle showed how errors, intentional or otherwise, could mislead the public into morally condemning an historical figure without justification.

2 Ibid., p. 614.

3 Ibid.

côté de la Science. Ce sont autant de trophées ou autant d'arcs de triomphe érigés à l'ignorance & à la faiblesse humaine."<sup>4</sup> This limited purpose was soon abandoned for a wider one, which is reflected in the scope of the digressions in the footnotes. As his earlier works testify, Bayle's chief passion was toleration, and it was no real surprise that his new work, the Dictionnaire, should reflect this passion.

In a letter which he wrote to Jacques du Rondel, Professor of "Belles Lettres" at Maestricht, on May 5th., 1692, Bayle put this question: "Les profondeurs abstraites des Mathématiques, dira-t-on, donnent de grandes idées de l'infinité de Dieu. Soit: mais croit-on qu'il ne puisse pas résulter un grand bien moral d'un Dictionnaire Critique?"<sup>5</sup> In this question lies the key to his theoretical view of the purpose of history. As Paul Hazard so aptly put it, "Il n'a jamais voulu perdre l'idée d'un certain bien moral à accomplir ... ."<sup>6</sup> History, as it emerges in the Dictionnaire, has a distinct utilitarian value; it contains its own implicit lessons. In the same letter to du Rondel, Bayle clarified the point:

---

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid. Bayle's letter to du Rondel, referred to in this thesis as "Projet", was appended to all editions of the Dictionnaire from 1720 on.

6 Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, p.103.

"... mais on m'avouëra, Monsieur, qu'une infinité de personnes peuvent profiter moralement parlant de la lecture d'un gros Recueil de Faussetez Historiques bien avérées; quand ce ne seroit que pour devenir plus circonspects à juger de leur prochain, & plus capables d'éviter les pieges que la Satire & la Flaterie tendent de toutes parts au pauvre Lecteur."<sup>7</sup>

Everywhere history provided examples of passions blinding men to the truth and the prudent way of life, but it was not only from falsehoods that moral lessons could be learned. A great deal could be learned from the very actions and beliefs of men:

"... il est plus utile & plus important que l'on ne pense, de représenter naïvement les horreurs, & les abominations que les Philosophes Paiens ont approuvées. Cela peut humilier & mortifier la Raison, & nous convaincre de la corruption infinie du coeur humain, & nous apprendre une vérité que nous devrions jamais perdre de vue; c'est que l'homme a eu besoin d'une Lumiere révélée, qui suplêât au défaut de la Lumiere Philosophique ... ."<sup>8</sup>

History, in other words, was nothing more than a catalogue of the errors, sins and follies of mankind, and there was nothing so trivial that we could not glean some moral lesson from it. Bayle saw it as his duty, and the duty of other historians, to present history accurately and objectively, and as far as possible, to remain free from partisanship.<sup>9</sup>

Thus presented, history would represent both the good and evil, the true and false, a necessary requirement it the correct moral lesson

---

7 "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.613.

8 HIPPARCHIA, note D.

9 The duties of an historian will be discussed in Chapter V.

were to be drawn:

"... l'Histoire de l'esprit humain, de ses sottises, & de ses extravagances, & l'Histoire des variétez infinies qui se trouvent dans les loix, & dans les usages des nations, ne sont pas des choses dont on doive fruster les Lecteurs, & dont on ne doive pas espérer des utilitez."<sup>10</sup>

Because of the gravity of the task with which the historian was charged, Bayle emphasized that it should not be left to every individual to write history. Because there were moral lessons to be learned from history, its writers should receive their commission from the state, for just as the writing of ecclesiastical history required the guiding hand of God, so too, civil history required the guiding hand of the sovereign:

"Il faudroit laisser ce soin à l'Histoire, & celui de composer l'Histoire à des personnes choisies, & autorisées pas ceux qui gouvernent: par ce moien les flétrissures, que l'Histoire infligeroit au nom & à la mémoire des gens qui méritent l'infamie publique, procédéroient de leur véritable source, & seroient comme une émanation de ce droit du glaive, dont le bras des Souverains est armé pour le châtiment des méchans."<sup>11</sup>

In other words, history was the moral sword which was used to punish or reward the figures of the past, and it rested only with the secular power, or more specifically with the sovereign, to wield this sword:

"... l'Histoire Civile ne fût composée que par des gens commis à cela par le Souverain de chaque Etat. Et alors la présomption seroit, que l'Histoire ne difameroit pas les gens sur de méchantes preuves ... "<sup>12</sup>

---

10 BLONDEL, François ii, note A.

11 "Dissertation sur les libelles diffamatoires", Dictionnaire, IV, p.581.

12 Ibid.

This last remark gives some hint of the practical and more important use to which Bayle himself put history in the Dictionnaire. Like Montaigne, Descartes, Milton, Spinoza and Locke before him, Bayle deduced that toleration and intellectual freedom were consonant with social and political order,<sup>13</sup> but here the similarity ends. He was neither systematic political theorist nor philosopher; his defence of toleration was part of a liberal philosophy which had an existence beyond the mainstream of sixteenth and seventeenth century political theory.<sup>14</sup> Because his concern was to offer a defence of toleration rather than a new political system, Bayle's use of history was entirely pragmatic, and as a consequence his political views were practical, if a little obsolete. His chief concern was to establish a rationale for a stable and peaceful political society in France, but like most other things in the Dictionnaire, his remarks on this subject are offered carelessly and at random throughout its folio volumes. Bayle was convinced that history, with its facts verified, could present lessons which should render men loyal and prevent civil wars. No fact was too insignificant for this purpose, not even the trivial question of whether

---

13 See W. H. Coates et al., The Emergence of Liberal Humanism, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966, p.86.

14 See Harold Laski, The Rise of European Liberalism. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936, pp.124-25.

we ought to say "Virgilius" or "Vergilius". The critics who pondered this trivia inspired a great veneration for Antiquity, which may have proved of great benefit, for it is possible that:

"... une grave & majestueuse Sentence tirée de Tite Live, ou de Tacite, & débitée comme aiant autrefois servi à porter d'un certain côté le Sénat Romain? Je ne feindrai point de dire qu'elle est capable de sauver un Etat, & que peut-être elle en a sauvé plus d'un."<sup>15</sup>

And how can this be? The answer is perhaps a little difficult to digest, more than the mouth can take at one bite, but it betrays Bayle's deeper motives:

"Le Président d'une Assemblée récite ces mots Latins avec emphase; il fait impression sur les esprits par le respect qu'on a pour le nom Romain: chacun se retire converti, chacun inspire dans son quartier les sentimens d'obéissance; & voilà une guerre civile étouffée dans son berceau."<sup>16</sup>

Bayle himself worked towards just such a purpose: to encourage obedience and stifle civil war. His political catechism was monarchical absolutism, in which he saw the future of political stability and peace in France, and always uppermost in his thoughts was his appeal for tolerance.

The fundamental statement which incorporated his practical ideas on the use and purpose of history occurs in the well known article MACON. Here he treated the subject of the French Wars of Religion, that sixteenth century holocaust which saw

---

15 "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.613.

16 Ibid.

open civil war in France, presses running hot with treatises on popular sovereignty and some of the most horrible examples of religious persecution known to man. With a certain disgust, Bayle asserted; "Pour l'honneur du nom François & du nom Chrétien, il seroit à souhaiter que la mémoire de toutes ces inhumanitez eût été d'abord abolie, & qu'on eût jetté au feu tous les Livres qui en parloient."<sup>17</sup> It was a "siècle abominable", the memory of which is scarred with bitterness, hatred, passion and suffering. Should historians even consider touching upon such barbarities? It was a fair question, Bayle admitted, for would it not rekindle dying hatred, revive settling passions? Had he not been personally accused of doing this? As much as one might wish that the memory of those years could be obliterated, the fact remains that numerous history books, which still exist, had dealt with the subject, and "... comme toutes choses ont deux faces, on peut souhaiter pour de très-bonnes raisons que la mémoire de tous ces effroyables desordres soit conservée soigneusement."<sup>18</sup> The "très-bonnes raisons" to which he alluded are the moral lessons to be drawn, which are available to everyone, but to which three types of people ought to pay attention, "Ceux qui gouvernent ... . Ceux qui conduisent les affaires Ecclésiastique ... [et] ces Théologiens remuans, qui prennent tant de plaisir à innover ... ."<sup>19</sup> It is considerable significance

---

17 MACON, note C.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid. The moral lessons are quoted in Chapter III, p.95, supra.



that these three categories correspond broadly to the three elements of French society in which Bayle saw the greatest threats to political stability and peace in France: Louis XIV, the Catholic Church, and the exiled Huguenot clergy. As we shall see, he made use of history, and in particular the events of the sixteenth century, to counter the political and social threats which these three elements represented, and in doing so, advanced a further stage towards the completion of his defence of toleration.

"Ceux qui gouvernement ... ."

As we have already mentioned above, Bayle's political point of view rested on the premise that toleration could only exist in a society where there was peace and political stability, and for this reason he remained throughout his life a firm and unswerving supporter of the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV. He showed no disposition to alter the political order of Europe, and in fact was one of the few Refugees who persistently maintained the pre-1685 Huguenot political philosophy after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>20</sup> Prior to 1685, the majority of Huguenots including Jean Claude and Pierre Jurieu, had been unflinching in their support for Louis XIV and the French monarchy, but after that date these men snatched up the banners of popular sovereignty and the rights of a people to resist tyranny with force. Bayle, almost alone of the Huguenots, remain a convinced monarchist, the result being that his ideas, which before 1685 had been thoroughly orthodox, afterwards became increasingly conservative and obsolete.

---

20 See Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, p.252.

He then began to assume the character of a seventeenth century Protestant counterpart of the "politiques", a man who found the continuance of civil war in France intolerable, and one who sought the toleration of all religious sects for the sake of peace and national unity. Bayle's position was like that of Epicurus, who made so many sacrifices for the welfare of his homeland: "Il souhaitoit de bons Souverains, & se soumettoit à ceux qui gouvernoient mal. C'est une Maxime très-necessaire au bien public, c'est le fondement de la sureté de tous les Etats."<sup>21</sup> As P. J. S. Whitmore has so aptly put it, Bayle became the first and foremost "Protestant Jacobite" of the seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup>

The anarchy and persecution which existed in France during the sixteenth century lay heavily on Bayle's conscience; firmly etched in his mind were the horrors of Vassey and St. Bartholomew's Night, and the whole religious holocaust which accompanied them. By contrast, he was acutely aware of the relative peace and stability France had enjoyed under Louis XIV. It is not surprising, then, that he should have dismissed with a wave of his hand, the new democratic idealism which

---

21 EPICURE, note O.

22 Whitmore, "The use made of English thought and history in the works of Pierre Bayle, with special reference to the Dictionnaire", p.10.

burst forth after 1685:

"Qu'on fasse ce qu'on voudra, qu'on bâtit des Systèmes meilleurs que la République de Platon, que l'Utopie de Morus, que la République du Soleil de Campanella, &c.: toutes ces belles idées se trouveroient courtes & défectueuses, dès qu'on les voudroit réduire en pratique. Les passions des hommes, qui naissent les unes des autres dans une variété prodigieuse, ruineroient bientôt les espérances qu'on auroit conçues de ces beaux Systèmes."<sup>23</sup>

We can detect in this passage, the fundamental reason for Bayle's lack of interest in political theory as such. His concern was not with the chimeric idea of the perfect political state, but with the practical realities which would produce peace and stability in France. Forget your paper theorizing; the political tumult of the early part of the seventeenth century in France:

"... ne venoit que de la diminution de l'autorité Royale, & cessa dès que le Cardinal de Richelieu eût abaissé aux pieds du thrône de Louis le Juste [Louis XIII] les Princes & les grans Seigneurs qui usurpoient une très-considérable partie de la puissance souveraine."<sup>24</sup>

Did not the stability which France had experienced since that time under Louis XIV testify to the value of absolute monarchy? Although Bayle had many criticisms to make of Hobbes and his political system, is it too far wide of the truth to see Bayle's own political beliefs coming to the surface in this précis he gives of the Leviathan?

---

23 HOBBS, note E.

24 GUISE, Louis de, note A.

"Les précis de cet Ouvrage est, que sans la paix il n'y a point de sûreté dans un Etat, & que la paix ne peut subsister sans le commandement, ni le commandement sans les armes; & que les armes ne valent rien si elles ne sont mises entre les mains d'une personne; & que la crainte des armes ne peut point porter à la paix ceux qui sont poussez à se battre par un mal plus terrible que la mort, c'est-à-dire, par les dissensions sur des choses nécessaires au salut."<sup>25</sup>

Bayle and Hobbes had this in common at least; they were both anxious to justify and encourage obedience to the absolute monarchies of their sovereigns.

Bayle drew upon frequent examples from history to assert the value of absolute monarchy over democracy. Using the example of Rome at the time of Julius Caesar, he asserted that republics, that is to say democratic republics, could only remain truly faithful to popular sovereignty if they desisted from foreign conquests and concentrated their popular energies within the confines of a small state. As soon as they embarked upon a programme of conquest, the popular sovereignty of republics was usurped by a few individuals, such as happened with Caesar, Brutus and Cassius.<sup>26</sup> But it was indeed rare for any democracy to succeed, for republics can be compared to man, who retains his innocence only in the cradle and for a few years after. Even a small democracy like Athens could boast its tyrannies, and what was more "Vous cherchiez en vain

---

25 HOBBS, note F.

26 BRUTUS, M. J., note F.

dans la Macedoine, qui étoit une Monarchie, autant d'exemples de Tyrannie, que l'Histoire Athenienne vous en présente."<sup>27</sup>

In his efforts to justify absolute monarchy, Bayle even condemned the instances of monarchies limited by parliaments. He remained curiously silent on the subject of England, however, confining himself to a condemnation of French assemblies. His explanation of this is rather unconvincing:

"Les Anglois ont raison de dire que la tenue fréquente des Parlemens est nécessaire au bien du païs; mais la France ne peut pas dire la même chose de ses Etats Généraux. On les convoqua souvent sous le Regne des fils de Henri II, & jamais la France ne fut plus brouillée, ni plus désolée, qu'en ce tems-là; & au lieu de trouver du remede dans ces Convocations, elle y empiroit."<sup>28</sup>

Elsewhere he said:

"L'Auteur du Testament Politique de Mr. de Louvois a bien mieux connu le genié de la Nation. Il pose en fait que le seul & le vrai moien d'éviter en France les guerres civiles est la puissance absolue du Souverain, soutenue avec vigueur, & armée de toutes les forces nécessaires à la faire craindre ... Il se pourroit tromper par rapport à certains païs; mais il n'a point d'apparence qu'il se trompe à l'égard de sa Nation ... "<sup>29</sup>

Bayle was uncompromising in his contempt for the Estates-General, and once again he drew upon history to support his point of view. The example, as is to be expected, came from the sixteenth century, when French parliaments enjoyed a full liberty of rejecting the King's

---

27 PERICLES, note Q. See also the comment on democracy in CAPPADOCE, note A.

28 MARILLAC, Charles de, note B.

29 LOUIS XIII, note A.

edicts, under the reigns of Charles IX and Henry III. Nothing could have been worse than the calamities which France suffered as a result of this privilege. "Il est aisé de prouver aussi que l'exercice de cette autorité fut la principale source des miseres du Roiaume depuis l'an 1562 jusqu'à l'an 1594."<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps it was merely an oversight that in another article, Bayle placed the chief blame for these miseries at the feet of François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise, and his brother, the Cardinal.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, he explained his charge fully in the article HOSPITAL:

"Disons en général que les Parlemens de France, en refusant de vérifier les Edits de pacification, ou en les vérifiant de mauvaise grace, & puis pas une suite naturelle, en les faisant par observer, ont été l'un des plus grans mobiles des longues calamitez qui ont désolé l'Etat, & qui ont pensé renverser de fond en comble la Monarchie. Si Charles-Quint eût régné en ce tems-là, elle seroit enfailliblement devenue une Province de ses Etats, ou bien elle auroit été partagée en mille pieces."<sup>32</sup>

No possible good could come from popular assemblies in France, where only the most trifling causes were considered, and a great deal of time was wasted.<sup>33</sup> The French parliaments had brought nothing but ruin to their country, and "Personne ne doit reconoître cette vérité plus franchement que ceux de la Religion; car c'étoit dans ces Assemblées que leurs ennemis prenoient de nouvelles forces."<sup>34</sup>

---

30 HOSPITAL, Michel de l', note K.

31 GUISE, François de, note C.

32 HOSPITAL, Michel de l', note K.

33 DUAREN, note F.

34 MARILLAC, Charles de, note B.

Bayle was not so naïve as to believe that absolute monarchy was perfect. It had many imperfections and weaknesses, and when, in MACON, he alluded to the moral lessons to be learned from history, it was these imperfections and weaknesses which he had in mind. In particular, he believed that Louis XIV had acted injudiciously in revoking the edict of Nantes, and in his anxiety to stress this fact, he lighted upon one of the principal weaknesses to which a monarchy was subjected. This weakness was religion, and in the article ABDAS, he stressed the fact that religion, far from being an artifice invented by sovereigns to keep their subjects in obedience, was more frequently a bind on the sovereigns themselves.<sup>35</sup> He continued with the observation that if monarchs did not profess the religion of their subjects, they ran the danger of losing their crowns. Two examples from recent history were the case of Henry of Navarre,<sup>36</sup> and more immediately that of James II of England. As a more general rule Bayle was willing to concede that monarchs more frequently adhered to the principle of sacrificing religious interests to those of their states, and

---

35 ABDAS, note B.

36 In SAMBLANCAI, Guillaume de Beaune, Baron de, note C, Bayle remarked of Henry IV: "Voilà un Roi bien souverain: il ne peut pas même obtenir que ses sujets aient la bonté de lui permettre de servir Dieu selon les lumieres de sa conscience; & c'est une honte au Christianisme d'avoir introduit dans l'Univers un si grand renversement de l'ordre. C'est aux sujets à demander la liberté de conscience à leur Souverain; & en voici qui la lui refusent."

and significantly, he seems to have condoned this action as politic for sound government.<sup>37</sup> Those monarchs who failed to adopt this principle frequently lost all they had, or could have, gained. Again history provided an example in the person of Henry II of France who concluded a peace treaty with the Austrians, "N'importe; il aim mieux leur accorder tout ce qu'ils voulurent, que de n'avoir pas ses coudées franches pour exterminer les Protestans de son Roiaume."<sup>38</sup> The strong prince was the one who considered politics before religion, for in EMMA we are told that ecclesiastics led weak princes by the nose, while strong ones frequently acted against the interests of religion.<sup>39</sup> The monarch, as a public figure, must consider his state above all else, a rule which prompted Bayle to applaud Queen Elizabeth of England for retaining her throne by carefully distinguishing between political and religious motives. That he condoned such morality as the public duty of a monarch, is evidenced by the following remark:

"Henri VI, le jouet de la fortune, captif plusieurs fois, massacré enfin dans la prison, étoit la meilleure ame qui se pût voir ... . Si au lieu de tant de vertus Chrétiennes Henri VI avoit possédé les qualitez d'un guerrier, & d'un politique, qui sait mettre tout en oeuvre pour se faire craindre, on ne lui eût pas débauché ses sujets avec la même facilité ... mais pour faire tomber un Prince scrupuleux & débonnaire, il ne faut que souffler dessus."<sup>40</sup>

---

37 ELISABETH, note G. See also ARGESILAUS II, note H, ARISTIDES, note C, BEUCAIRE, note F, and HENRI II, note AA.

38 HENRI II, note D.

39 EMMA, note A.

40 EDOUARD IV, note F.



There is one further weakness to which monarchies were subjected, one which perhaps had considerable importance at the time that Bayle was writing. The subject of this weakness was discussed under the article BOURGOGNE, Philippe de, where Bayle made the observation:

"Le Regne de Charles VI nous représente l'endroit foible du Gouvernement Monarchique. Les autres especes de Gouvernement ont chacune leur mauvais côté; mais elles ne sont point sujettes à l'enfance, ni à la démence, comme sont les Rois. La Loi Monarchique veut dans les Roiaumes héréditaires, que celui qui est dans l'ordre de la succession occupe le Thrône, quoi qu'il soit enfant, ou qu'à cause de sa vieillesse, ou de quelque maladie, il soit retombé dans l'enfance. Par là, les plus furieuses et le plus funestes dissensions s'introduisent dans un pais, comme la France l'éprouva sous le Regne de Charles sixième."<sup>41</sup>

Was not Louis XIV a minor himself when he ascended the throne of France, and had he not already been ruling for above fifty years when Bayle was writing? Perhaps Bayle personally attributed France's troubles to the fact that Louis was in his declining years. But then, there is no specific evidence of this fact, only the lesson to be learned about this weakness in kings: rejoice if they are good kings, obey them if they are bad.

"Ceux qui conduisent les affaires Ecclésiastiques ... ."

As part of his justification of absolute monarchy, Bayle turned his attention to another problem which threatened the peace

---

41 BOURGOGNE, Philippe duc de, surnommé le bon, note A. See also HENRI II, note P.

and security of France, the insidious influence (as he saw it) held over Louis XIV by his Jesuit advisors. Bayle remained convinced that the Roman Catholic Church, as represented by the Jesuits, was ultimately responsible for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the dreadful persecutions which followed it. Louis XIV had at last been prevailed upon to use his secular sword in a religious matter, an action which Bayle sincerely deplored. The spectre of Vassey loomed again, and in the hope of reversing the trend, he set about clarifying once again, the separation of the sovereign's temporal power from any connection with spiritual power.<sup>42</sup> As far as Bayle was concerned, the days of King David were past history; the monarchy now should be not only absolute, but secular as well.

He was intransigent with regard to those ecclesiastics who made use of the secular sword for the persecution of heretics. History was filled with examples of them, and the degradation to which they had brought their countries. And now, in his own time, Bayle was confronted with the worst example of all. Can there be any doubt as to whom he is referring in this passage?

---

42 It is interesting to note that at the time of the Revocation, this principle of the separation of powers was also coming under attack from Jurieu's faction in Holland. See Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, p. 215. Bayle dealt extensively with this subject in the Commentaire philosophique (1686).

"... on ne sauroit s'empêcher de plaindre la destinée des Souverains, & leur dependance inévitable de leur Clergé. Dévots ou non, ils seront toujours obligés de le ménager & de le craindre: c'est un véritable 'Imperium in Imperio'. Il est vrai, le Regne de Jesus-Christ n'est point de ce monde: il l'a dit lui-même: mais ceux qui le représentent ne laissent pas d'être bien souvent les maîtres des Rois de la terre, & d'ôter ou de donner des couronnes; & ceux qui nous parlent tant de l'Eglise militante ont plus de raison qu'ils ne croient."<sup>43</sup>

Although the reference is not direct, it is almost certain that Bayle would have had in mind Louis XIV's dependence on his Jesuit advisors. They were one of the principal obstacles to the implementation of toleration in France, and their Church, far from being a pillar of society, was more frequently a source of instability:

"La Religion, qui est regardée par tout le monde comme le plus ferme appui de l'Autorité souveraine, & qui le seroit effectivement si elle étoit bien entendue & bien pratiquée, est ordinairement ce qui énerve le plus cette même Autorité ... . Lisez bien l'Histoire de l'Eglise Romaine, vous trouverez que les plus grans Princes du monde ont eu plus à craindre les passions que les zélateurs excitent, que les armes des Infideles: ainsi ce qui devroit être l'affermissement de la République, & de la Majesté de l'Etat, est bien souvent l'obstacle le plus invincible que les Souverains rencontrent à l'exécution de leurs ordres."<sup>44</sup>

Bayle's misgivings about the Jesuits had an even deeper significance, however, for the Society of Jesus was renowned everywhere as being Ultramontanist in sympathy. The Jesuits had incited monarchs to use their secular sword in matters of religion, certainly, but those princes who had sufficient strength to resist such pressures ran the risk of another problem; the argument for the Pope's right to depose sovereigns, the Jesuits being the most ardent preachers of this

---

43 BROSSIER, note E.

44 JUNIUS, François I, note B.

doctrine. It is little wonder that Bayle should have attacked this order so vigorously in the article LOYOLA,<sup>45</sup> an order which preached so many doctrines which were contrary to the interests of peace and stability in France, at least as he saw it.

As recently as 1681, he noted, there was published in France an edition of Thomas Barlow's book, An Historical Treatise on the Subject of Excommunicating and Deposing Kings, in which the author maintained that it was still an article of the Roman faith that the Pope retained the right to depose sovereigns.<sup>46</sup> Because of this disclosure, the book, which was originally published during the Titus Oates affair in England, had aroused a great deal of national sentiment against the Catholics there. Bayle considered the doctrine to be completely untenable. If the sovereign had no right to dabble in religious affairs, equally, the Pope had no right to interfere in secular matters. The logic of this is exposed in the article GREGOIRE VII, where Bayle explained:

"Qu'on suppose tant qu'on voudra que Jesus-Christ a établi Vicariat dans son Eglise, le bon sens, la droit raison, ne laisseront pas de nous apprendre qu'il l'a établi, non pas en qualité de souverain Maître, & de Créateur de toutes choses ... . Ce Vicaire ne pourroit tout au plus que décider de la doctrine qui sauve, ou qui damne ... . Ainsi ceux-mêmes qui ont été le plus fortement persuadez que le Pape est le Vicaire de Jesus-Christ, ont dû regarder comme un abus du Vicariat tout ce qui sentoît la jurisdiction temporelle, & l'autorité de punir le corps."<sup>47</sup>

---

45 LOYOLA, note S.

46 BARLOW, note B.

47 GREGOIRE VII, note S.

On the subject of the separation of powers, Bayle delivered the moral sermons forcefully. For ecclesiastics who promoted the use of the secular sword for religious persecution, there was nothing but condemnation:

"... car il n'y a rien de plus détestable que d'employer les suplices contre ceux qui ne se séparent d'une Religion que par la crainte d'offenser Dieu, & qui dans tout le reste se comportent en très-bons sujets; il n'y a rien de plus raisonnable que de laisser à Dieu seul l'empire de la conscience."<sup>48</sup>

For those monarchs who submitted to the pressures of ecclesiastics there was a warning: take heed of the numerous instances in history where states have been brought to ruin because monarchs have indulged in religious persecution:

"Cela doit apprendre aux Princes que les Edits de persécution les exposent à de grans inconvéniens: cela est cause que leurs feux de joie affligent une partie de leurs sujets, & que les victoires de leurs ennemis la remplissent de consolation. S'ils se plaignent d'avoir de mauvais sujets, on leur doit répondre, c'est vous qui les rendez tels; car de prétendre qu'un Parti persécuté s'affligera des maux publics qui sont la source de son repos, & le fondement d'une espérance très-plausible de prospérité, c'est prétendre le retour des premiers siècles du Christianisme; or ces tems-là ne reviennent pas deux fois."<sup>49</sup>

Although Bayle would not admit so openly, this last remark was obviously directed at Louis XIV, which becomes clear if we read on:

"C'est ainsi que l'on a vu la même Cour laisser perdre les occasions les plus favorables de s'agrandir l'an 1684, afin de s'appliquer uniquement à la suppression de l'Edit de Nantes. Ceux qui se laissent posséder de cet esprit n'ont qu'à renoncer au titre de Conquérant."<sup>50</sup>

---

48 FRANCOIS I<sup>er</sup>, note O.

49 HENRI II, note D.

50 Ibid.

The lesson to be learned from history was clearly spelled out for Louis. If he wished to defeat the alliance of European powers which was formed against him in 1688, he must renounce all aspirations to religious power, re-proclaim the Edict of Nantes, and recapture the loyalty of his Huguenot subjects.

"[et] ces Théologiens remuans, qui prenant tant de plaisir à innover ...."

As we have already noted, following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Jurieu and most of the other Huguenot exiles renounced their support for Louis XIV and turned towards the new theories of popular sovereignty and resistance. Isolated though he was by this turn of events, Bayle was able to perceive that Jurieu and his followers posed yet another ominous threat to the stability of France, but this time from the refuge of England and Holland. The new doctrines of Law, Liberty and the limitation of royal power, for which Bayle had only contempt, became the subject of innumerable tracts and pamphlets which flooded these countries after 1685, and increased especially in number and intransigence after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England.<sup>51</sup> The open split which occurred after the Revocation, among the Huguenots in exile, culminated in two factions, the "moderates", who included Bayle among their number, and the "zealots", unofficially led by Pierre Jurieu.<sup>52</sup>

---

51 In ARNISAËUS, note A Bayle remarked on the fact that in the year 1699, books on this subject were more numerous and popular than ever.

52 The terms "moderates" and "zealots" seem to have first been used by Guy Howard Dodge. (See The Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Dispersion, chap. IV, pp.94-138). Since these terms are now widely used by historians, I have followed the convention.

Jurieu clamoured for a united Protestant crusade to drive Catholicism from France,<sup>53</sup> an appeal made with such passion that Bayle became increasingly alarmed. He was deeply concerned for the fate of those Huguenots still remaining in France and bearing the burden of the persecutions. With William of Orange on the English throne, and most of the European powers united in a war against Louis XIV,<sup>54</sup> it must certainly have appeared to Bayle that Jurieu's cry for a religious crusade against France had already been answered. He was acutely aware that while Louis was so hard pressed, it was highly unlikely that the King would lend a sympathetic ear to any appeals to his reason and conscience to restore religious toleration in France. On the contrary, it was more probable that the Huguenots would be blamed for France's recent reversal of fortune, and that their persecution would only be intensified. To make matters worse, Jurieu had put forward the claim that those of his religion were no longer bound by their oath of loyalty to their former king.<sup>55</sup> With many young Huguenots already serving in the armies of William of Orange and the German princes, Louis XIV could hardly be expected to have sympathy for his Protestant subjects.

---

53 See Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, p.216; Rex also mentions the interesting fact that Jurieu claimed to have had the sanction of William for his doctrines, and was used by the English government to co-ordinate a spy ring (p.225, n.84).

54 England, Spain, Holland, Austria and most of the German states were at war with Louis XIV by November, 1688.

55 See Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, p.239, n.147.

Naturally enough, under such circumstances, Bayle felt obliged to intensify his appeal for toleration, and to denounce not only Jurieu and his followers, but their theories as well.

Jurieu and his followers, living as they were in the Low Countries, mingled with an assortment of intellectuals, - refugees from the Exclusion Crisis in England, republicans, and a variety of Protestant clergymen. In such an intellectual environment, he could hardly avoid being put in touch with all the current theories of popular resistance, many of which were derived from the Monarchomach doctrines which were revived during the English Exclusion Crisis. The criticisms which he levelled at Louis XIV from Holland initially covered a variety of subjects, but following the English Revolution, there appeared in his Lettres pastorales (1686-1689) an open call to his fellow subjects to rebel against their king. The justification for such a call to arms lay in his belief that there was an implicit contract in existence between subjects and ruler, and as in all such contracts, there were mutual obligations. For the monarch, there was the obligation to protect and safeguard the physical and spiritual liberty of his subjects. When he violated this obligation, his subjects were under the obligation to resist him. Such an obligation should be invoked, he claimed, especially when the monarch violated the supreme liberty of worshipping according to conscience.<sup>56</sup> Jurieu's contact with the English Whigs had

---

56 See Kingsley Martin, French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century, 2nd. ed., London: Turnstile Press, 1954, p.33.



left its mark in his uncompromising stand on sovereignty. When the king exceeded the limits of his authority, he maintained, his subjects had a right to depose him. They alone, had no need to be right for their actions to be valid.<sup>57</sup>

This political volte-face on Jurieu's part, from supporting to criticising the French monarchy, in all probability provoked this scathing remark from Bayle's pen: "Généralement parlant c'est une preuve que les passions font parler ou pour ou contre le droit des Princes, que de voir que les mêmes gens disent là-dessus le oui & le non à mesure que les intérêts de leur cause se trouvent changez."<sup>58</sup> But Bayle was not content to let the matter rest there. Once more he mustered his historical resources, this time for a direct attack on Jurieu's doctrines. If we turn to the article ELISABETH,<sup>59</sup> the text affords us with an account of the persecutions inflicted upon English Papists, as a consequence of their slanders and libels against the reputation of Queen Elizabeth and her government. It could hardly be a more obvious allegorical warning to Jurieu that his own diatribes against Louis XIV would result in more persecutions for those Huguenots remaining in France. If Huguenots preached the right of subjects to depose sovereigns, it would only provoke Louis into intensifying their persecution. Calm reason and not zeal was required.

---

57 Ibid.

58 KNOX, note H. See also BARCLAI, Guillaume, note E.

59 ELISABETH, in corp. See also notes L and U.

His principal attack on the idea of popular resistance, however, is to be found in the article LOYOLA.<sup>60</sup> Here he mentioned two doctrines which were ardently supported by the Jesuits: that the authority of kings is inferior to that of the people; and that kings may be punished by the people in certain cases. The Jesuits, he remarked, were not the inventors of these doctrines, but they were responsible for putting them into the most odious practice. In the same breath, he condemned the notion that sovereigns were given the secular sword to punish heretics. The reasoning of the Jesuits on this subject was that if sovereigns refused to use their power to persecute heretics, then the people, the true sovereigns, had a responsibility to assume the task, and the king should be dethroned. It was the sovereign's duty to persecute heretics but, if because of some threat to the security of the state the king should be obliged to grant toleration, the concession should remain only while the danger existed, and then persecution should once again be resumed. At this point, Bayle noted with a certain pleasure that the Third Estate of France condemned all such doctrines as pernicious. Then followed the significant thrust at Jurieu. This French pastor, Bayle continued, accepted a similar line of reasoning to that of the Jesuits, viz. "'Les Princes peuvent faire mourir les hérétiques, donc ils doivent les faire mourir'",<sup>61</sup> only this time the heretics were not Protestants, but

---

60 LOYOLA, note S.

61 Ibid.

Catholics. Although the footnote under which all of this is discussed was ostensibly a criticism of the Jesuits, its general condemnation of the ideas of popular sovereignty and resistance lead me to believe that it is equally an allegorical criticism of Jurieu's own political beliefs. That Bayle should have used allegory as a means of criticising Jurieu is not surprising, for Jurieu's political influence in Holland is an established fact.<sup>62</sup> In 1693, he had already used this influence with the Walloon Consistory to secure Bayle's dismissal from his professorship in Rotterdam, the excuse being that Bayle was an enemy of William of Orange.<sup>63</sup> Any open condemnation of this zealous pastor would probably be interpreted by him as an act of treachery against William and Holland. Obviously then, prudence forbade Bayle to speak too openly against the political beliefs of his arch-antagonist. In fact, in this very article he admitted as much himself:

---

62 See n.53 of this chapter. See also Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, pp.233-34.

63 Ibid., pp.223-34, in particular p.234, n.126. In BAUDIUS, note F Bayle remarked: " Dans toutes sortes de païs, il n'y a que trop de gens qui s'imaginent qu'on ne peut raisonner autrement qu'eux sur les affaires d'Etat, sans être gagné par les ennemis de la patrie. Il y en a d'autres, qui sont beaucoup plus éclairés: ils savent fort bien qu'avec un grand zèle pour le bien public, on peut opiner d'une manière toute contraire à la leur ... ."

"L'opinion que les Souverains ont reçu de Dieu le glaive pour punir les Hérétiques est encore plus universelle que la précédente, & a été réduite en pratique parmi les Chrétiens depuis Constantin jusques à présent, dans toutes les Communions Chrétiennes qui ont dominé sur les autres, & à peine ose-t-on écrire en Hollande contre une telle opinion."<sup>64</sup>

But this is even more significant if we consider Jurieu's call for a religious crusade against France. William, a Protestant prince, now had the power to lead such a crusade, so Jurieu was bound to regard with disfavour any efforts to prevent this.

The allegory in the Dictionnaire goes even farther, however. In another article, Bayle allegorically highlighted the unreasonableness of Jurieu's position in maintaining against the Catholics the very arguments which the Jesuits used against the Protestants. In GELDENHAUR, he carefully laid bare the irony of the situation. The early Church fathers did not pretend:

"... ôter aux Princes le droit du glaive qu'ils tiennent de Dieu; on vouloit seulement dire que ce droit ne s'étend pas sur les erreurs de la conscience, & que les Souverains n'ont pas reçu de Dieu la puissance de persécuter les Religions ... d'où vient qu'Erasme n'a osé les imiter? Et ce qui est bien plus étonnant, d'où vient que depuis quelques années un Ministre de Hollande<sup>65</sup> a tâché de rendre odieux les Tolérans, par la raison qu'ils ôtoient aux Souverains un des plus beaux droits de leur Majesté? N'est-ce pas être plus malin & plus injuste que les Paiens ne l'étoient contre les Peres de la primitive Eglise, ausquels ils ne reprochoient point ce prétendu attentat sur les droits des Souverains, ou ce prétendu crime d'Etat? Mais pour montrer l'illusion de ce Ministre, il suffit de lui demander pourquoi il ôte aux Rois Catholiques le droit du glaive par raport aux Protestans? Pourquoi se croit-il permis ce qu'il blâme dans les

---

64 LOYOLA, note S.

65 There can be little doubt that the minister to whom Bayle was referring here was Pierre Jurieu.

autres comme un crime de leze-majesté? Je parle pour la vérité, dira-t-il; mais sa prétention est celle de tout le monde."<sup>26</sup>

Bayle's attack on the rights of popular sovereignty is not confined to the article LOYOLA. For example in the article BODIN, he summarised that sixteenth century "politique" as saying that no matter what "meschancetez, impiétez, & cruautez" a monarch may have committed, it did not belong to his subjects, either individually or generally, to make any attempt against his honour or life.<sup>67</sup> The results of such attempts have been made clear elsewhere. Despite the fact that Bodin later contradicted this opinion when he sided with the Catholic League of the Guises, Bayle indicated his own acceptance of the opinion when he pointed out that we are at liberty to presume that "la chute d'un pécheur n'empêche pas que les bonnes actions qu'il avoit faites ne soient bonnes."<sup>68</sup>

On the subject of allegory in the Dictionnaire, Walter Rex has noted two further points. In his erudite and detailed analysis of the article DAVID, he claims that in the first edition of the Dictionnaire, when Bayle condemned King David for joining the Philistines to fight his own people, the Israelites, he really had in mind the contemporary problem of the Huguenots.<sup>69</sup> Jurieu had claimed that France's Protestants were no longer bound by their oath of loyalty to

---

66 GELDENHAUR, note F. See also MAHOMET, note O.

67 BODIN, note Q.

68 Ibid.

69 Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, pp.238-39.

Louis XIV, and were free to enlist in the foreign armies which were at that time at war with France. Since many young Huguenots had readily accepted this advice, Bayle's condemnation of David is quite rightly seen by Rex as an allegorical criticism of Jurieu and those who accepted his doctrines. The second point which Rex makes is that note G of the article DAVID can be seen as an allegorical treatment of the deposition of James II and the revolutionary content of Jurieu's Lettres pastorales.<sup>70</sup>

On this latter point, there is further evidence of Bayle's keen awareness of the importance of the 1688 Revolution to the Huguenots in the article ELISABETH. Dr. P. J. S. Whitmore has noted in his thesis the use to which Bayle has put English history and learning in the Dictionnaire,<sup>71</sup> and while I consider that he rather over-inflates the importance of Bayle's specifically English knowledge, there can be no doubting the value which Bayle placed on 1688 as a piece of historical evidence. We learn in note I of ELISABETH, that the excuse the English used in 1688 to depose James II was that Elizabeth had once broken a promise to maintain the Catholic religion in England when she ascended the throne. "Ainsi les Anglois", he continued "ont pu se persuader que Jaques II ne craindroit point les mauvaises suites d'un manquement de parole en matier de Religion ...".<sup>72</sup> An oath once broken by a monarch

---

70 Ibid., pp.239-41.

71 Whitmore, "The use made of English thought and learning in the works of Pierre Bayle, with special reference to the Dictionnaire."

72 ELISABETH, note I.

had made the English cautious a second time, and in their eyes this seemed to justify the deposition of James. But in a sense Louis XIV had also broken his oath to the French Huguenots by revoking the Edict of Nantes, and Bayle could foresee what capital Jurieu would, and did, make of this. Jurieu's proclamation of a holy war against France, allied to the fact that the deposed English king was not only a close friend of Louis', but also enjoyed his protection, seemed to Bayle evidence enough that the French monarchy was in dire peril.

Perhaps the best example of the moral use to which Bayle put history is to be found in the article AMYRAUT. Its tone, its length and the praise Bayle had for this Protestant minister, all suggest that the article was included for a specific purpose. In fact the footnotes contain a perfect moral lesson in the very ideas on toleration and politics which Bayle himself held. The article and its appendages are almost a straight narration of the events and ideas which marked Amyraut's career. As a piece of historical writing, this article is truly "philosophy teaching by example".<sup>73</sup> Everywhere we find lengthy remarks on Amyraut's belief in passive obedience, liberty of conscience and absolutism. In note Q, for example, we learn that he believed the French Huguenots should have shown the same patience under the persecution of the sixteenth century as the early Christians did under the Roman persecutions. In 1650, following the death of Charles I of

---

73 See Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers, Chap. III.

England, Amyraut published a book under the title de la Souveraineté des Rois, in which he denounced the action of subjects in taking up arms against their sovereigns.<sup>74</sup> A little further on we learn that during the last minority (presumably that of Louis XIV) he constantly exhorted his congregation to maintain passive obedience towards the king, saying that "il n'y avoit point d'autre party a prendre que de se tenir au gros de l'arbre",<sup>75</sup> a sermon to which Bayle himself would have lent wholehearted support. The narrative continues:

"... il établit, que par les véritables principes du Christianisme les sujets ne doivent point prendre les armes contre leurs Souverains. Il se déclare hautement pour ce qu'on nomme 'l'obéissance passive'. Cet Ouvrage [i.e. de la Souveraineté des Rois] fut dédié au Roi d'Angleterre Charles II,<sup>76</sup> peu après que ce Prince fut remonté sur le Trône."<sup>77</sup>

Like Bayle, Amyraut made one exception to the stringent rule of obeying sovereigns, and that was in matters which concerned conscience. Once again Bayle made the point by narrating an historical example, - the occasion when Amyraut, like the English ambassador Stafford some seventy years before him, refused to hand out drapes in Paris for the feast of Corpus Christi.<sup>78</sup> As elsewhere in the article, the moral lesson cannot

---

74 AMYRAUT, note Q.

75 Ibid.

76 Bayle deplored Cromwell's usurpation of power in England, and praised Charles II for his generosity to the French refugees. See P. J. S. Whitmore, "English Thought and Learning in the Works of Pierre Bayle", French Studies, VIII, 1954, p.143, n.20.

77 AMYRAUT, note Q.

78 Ibid.



be mistaken. Bayle appears to have regarded Amyraut like Melanchthon,<sup>79</sup> as the embodiment of the prudent and temperate Protestant divine. His ideas epitomised Bayle's own, and the inclusion of this article only serves to underline the conviction with which Bayle held them.

There is no escaping the conclusion that Bayle used history to his own ends. Wherever the opportunity presented itself, he would draw from an historical incident some moral lesson concerning toleration, liberty of conscience or the duties of a sovereign. There is also no doubt that his perfunctory gesture at formulating a theoretical purpose for history was derived from the moral use to which he himself was able to put history. He had the added advantage of treating not one, but a multiplicity, of historical subjects, which allowed him a free hand in choosing his examples. As Edward Gibbon noted when he read the Dictionnaire: "It permitted him everything, and obliged him to nothing. By the double freedom of a dictionary and of notes, he could pitch on what article he pleased, and say what he pleased on those articles."<sup>80</sup> The most important conclusion to draw, however, is the fact that Bayle's notion of the purpose of history underlines his essentially seventeenth century character. With his ideas firmly grounded in the humanist tradition, he used history to spell out the important moral lessons

---

79 See Chapter III, pp.88-90.

80 Edward Gibbon, Miscellaneous Works, 5 vols., London: John Murray, 1814, V, p.238.

associated with toleration. He was concerned entirely with the political and religious issues of his times in so far as they threatened the peace of Europe. Political peace was the prerequisite of religious toleration, and historical evidence was the best proof of this. In the following chapter, we shall see how Bayle's view of historical causation evolved from his concern for negating the view that the will of God inspired religious persecution.

### CHAPTER III

#### CAUSATION IN HISTORY

Bayle's view of causation in history is reflected primarily in his attack on religious orthodoxy. One of the principal arguments which he pursued against the advocates of persecution in many of the footnotes was that orthodoxy in religion cannot be justified on rational grounds, since religious truth is a matter for the individual conscience guided by revelation. To be able to justify such a conclusion, he had to presume two fundamental ideas: first that man possesses a certain degree of liberty of action and freedom of will, and as a consequence, secondly that the guiding hand of Providence in human affairs be restricted to allow man this freedom of action. These ideas, however, have a further importance. The former was necessary if there were to be any value in his appeal for men to cease the cruelties of persecution and adopt the principles of toleration, for he must show that the responsibility for persecution rested with man. The latter idea was necessary to forestall the use of absolute Providential determinism as a justification of persecution, for frequently religious sects or causes would point to Providential favour to excuse their barbarities. In seeking to divide causation between man and God, Bayle naturally risked contradicting Calvin's teachings on Providence and predestination, and suffering the accusation of heresy. Consequently, not only his defence of toleration, but the

very sincerity of his religious beliefs, depended upon the manner in which he resolved the causal relationship between man and God.

The question of the sincerity of Bayle's religious views has been the subject of considerable dispute in recent years. Although interpretations have varied widely they tend to fall broadly into two categories: those who seek to emphasize his religious sincerity by highlighting his seventeenth century background, in particular, his political and religious milieu, and those who doubt his religious sincerity, by indicating his advance towards scepticism and the use made of his ideas in the various attacks on religion during the eighteenth century. The dispute tends, on the whole, to centre around the discussion of religious and philosophical questions in the Dictionnaire, but rarely to any of the disputants relate such discussions to any underlying purpose in the work. Without such a guide, the task of determining Bayle's religious sincerity is a baffling one, as the conflict of interpretations indicates.

The belief that Bayle remained a sincere Calvinist till his death is not a new one, and can be traced back to Sainte Beuve's nineteenth century work Portraits Littéraires.<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest recent attempts to advance such a view was made by W. H. Barber in

---

1 Sainte Beuve, "du Génie critique et de Bayle" in Portraits Littéraires, Oeuvres de Sainte Beuve. Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1949, I, pp.978-99.

1952.<sup>2</sup> In Barber's view, the negative and destructive criticisms which led to Bayle's double conversion did not necessarily prevent him from holding sincere religious beliefs, but rather destroyed his confidence in reason where matters of faith were at issue. More importantly, Barber recognized the causal relationship between many of Bayle's religious views and his conception of history, claiming that the latter was "not only profoundly Christian, but essentially Calvinist". Almost a decade later, in 1962, E. D. James published an article<sup>3</sup> in which he took exception to the views of some of the contributors to the Dibon volume, Pierre Bayle, le philosophe de Rotterdam. James also advanced the view that Bayle was less a sceptic than an orthodox Calvinist, and maintained that even where Bayle's religious views betrayed a fideistic element, as in the question of free-will, he took a strongly Calvinist line. James was concerned, in particular, to examine Bayle's religious views beyond what he referred to as the usual article PYRRHON. With the exception of Mme Labrousse's monumental study of Bayle<sup>4</sup> which will be discussed

---

2 W. H. Barber, "Pierre Bayle: Faith and Reason", in The French Mind, ed. W. Moore et al. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952, pp.109-25.

3 E. D. James, "Scepticism and Fideism in Bayle's Dictionnaire" in French Studies, xiv, Oct. 1962, no. 4, p.307.

4 Labrousse, Pierre Bayle, 2 vols., 1963-4.

in later chapters, the most recent attempt to portray Bayle as an orthodox Calvinist was the previously mentioned study by Walter Rex, in 1965.<sup>5</sup> Closely analysing the article DAVID, Rex endeavoured to prove that its opinions were Calvinism of the most orthodox type, whereas Bayle's erstwhile friend, Pierre Jurieu, often placed considerable strain on orthodox Calvinist teachings. The real contribution of Rex's discussion of this single article from the Dictionnaire, is that he placed it in the context of Bayle's struggle with the over-zealous Jurieu and the Huguenot theories of resistance which abounded after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. It is of considerable significance that on the one hand Barber has made the association between Bayle's Calvinism and his view of history, while of the other Rex has made the association between Bayle's Calvinism and his role in the Toleration Controversy. It will be the purpose of this chapter to attempt to define an association between Bayle's view on toleration and his concept of causation as seen against the background of his religious faith.

Of those who doubt Bayle's religious sincerity, two recent articles deserve mention. In 1963, H. T. Mason made a challenge to

---

5 Rex, Essays on Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy. The chapter entitled: "Bayle's Article on David" originally appeared in two parts under the title: "Pierre Bayle: the theology and politics on David" in Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, xxxiv, 1952, 1, pp.168-89 and xxv, 1963, 11, pp.366-403.

Barber's thesis,<sup>6</sup> in which he concluded that Bayle's professed orthodoxy was in all probability a ruse to avoid attracting unwelcome criticism from his enemies, in particular one would presume, Pierre Jurieu. Although Mason is not completely at variance with Barber's views, he argues that there is ample reason to doubt Bayle's religious sincerity. In his book Pierre Bayle and Voltaire,<sup>7</sup> which also appeared in 1963, Mason goes on to assert that Bayle was in fact advocating the Manichean hypothesis. I find this a baffling assertion which I can only attribute to a misunderstanding of the meaning of the articles MANICHEENS, MARCIONITES, and PAULICIENS. It is interesting that Mason should point out that even Voltaire did not consider Bayle a Manichean believer, Voltaire who misconstrued the meaning of so many articles in the Dictionnaire. The second monograph to reflect doubts as to Bayle's religious sincerity was an emphatic challenge to E. D. James's thesis by Harry M. Bracken,<sup>8</sup> published in 1964. Bracken sought to point out the deficiencies in James's argument, and to reassert the value of seeking out the relationship between Bayle's philosophical scepticism and his religious views

---

6 H. T. Mason, "Pierre Bayle's religious views", in French Studies, XVII, 3, July 1963, pp.205-217.

7 Mason, Pierre Bayle and Voltaire.

8 Harry M. Bracken, "Bayle not a Sceptic?", in the Journal of the History of Ideas, 25, no. 2, 1964, pp.169-80.

in order to reveal the extent of both his scepticism and his fideism. Both Mason and Bracken, however, tend to draw their evidence from isolated theological and philosophical discussions in the Dictionnaire, rather than relating this evidence to some purpose in the work as a whole. Although, as Mason points out, we cannot avoid recognizing that the "philosophes" regarded Bayle as their precursor, it is a mistake to interpret Bayle's views in terms of what the eighteenth century made of them. Bayle's own motives for writing what he did must remain the essential key to an understanding of his beliefs, especially with relation to theology. It is here perhaps, that this present study can hope to make some contribution to a further understanding of Bayle, by revealing at least one of the primary purposes of the Dictionnaire - to defend toleration - and the relationship this has to his philosophy of history.

Of the discussion of religious questions in the Dictionnaire, there are three that can be shown to have a direct bearing both on Bayle's defence of toleration and upon his view of causation. They are the questions of free-will, Providential determinism and the origin of evil. E. D. James, in his articles on Bayle's fideism, lists five points which he considers central to Bayle's religious views: the rational proofs for the existence of God; natural law; the immortality of the soul; free-will; and the controlling activity of a benevolent Providence.<sup>9</sup> It is significant that he should

---

9 James, "Scepticism and Fideism in Bayle's Dictionnaire", p.322.



conclude that only Bayle's views on the proofs of the last three betray any element of fideism, for two of these, as I have said, are fundamentally concerned with his defence of toleration and his views of causation. Before Bayle can finally hope to resolve the relationship between free-will and Providential determinism, however, there is another important question to be considered - the origin of evil. His discussion of this question is one of the most original elements in the Dictionnaire and perhaps one of the most controversial. Apart from being used to show the impossibility of arriving at rational justifications of orthodoxy in religion, the question of the origin of evil also involves the first significant act of history. The respective roles of man and God in causation cannot be settled until the responsibility for this first act is determined. As Bayle set out to show, attempts to solve the problem rationally can only lead to the heresy of Manichean dualism or the inadequate 'a priori' arguments for free-will and the Christian notion of the Devil. It is clear that Bayle's own solution to the problem had to be one that did not detract from man's responsibility in the act, or he would destroy the point of his defence of toleration, and one which did not contradict the Calvinist teaching on predestination, or he, himself, would fall into heresy. Although he is ultimately obliged to retreat behind the screen of fideism on all three of these questions, he nevertheless remained throughout, completely within the bounds of orthodox Calvinist theology.

Ultimately Bayle's concept of causation in history rests upon his view of the nature of man, a view which immediately reflects the influence of his Calvinist upbringing, as well as his powers of historical observation. He began with the pessimistic assertion that man is fundamentally wicked and unhappy, a conclusion, as we shall see, which ultimately led him to a denial of progress in history. With almost Hobbesian gloom he pronounced: "L'homme est méchant & malheureux: chacun le conoit par ce qui se passe au dedans de lui, & par le commerce qu'il est obligé d'avoir avec son prochain."<sup>10</sup> Not only was man wicked and unhappy, but what was more alarming: "... il y a dans le genre humain une source d'Anarchie que l'on ne sauroit boucher."<sup>11</sup> As further support for this view of the unfortunate state of man, Bayle went on to say: "Si l'homme n'étoit pas un animal indisciplinable, ne se seroit-il pas corrigé de son orgueil, après tant de preuves de la Maxime d'Esopé réitérées en chaque païs, & en chaque siècle?"<sup>12</sup> Understandably then, with such a creature as the object of its study, history could hardly be described as more than "un Recueil des crimes & des infortunes du genre humain."<sup>13</sup> Despite this obvious excess of

---

10 MANICHEENS, note D.

11 ARNAULD, Antoine, fils d'Antoine Arnauld, l'Avocat, note B.B.

12 ESCOPE, note I.

13 MANICHEENS, note D.

wickedness in man's nature, Bayle showed his deference to the doctrine of predestination when he offered the reservation that history does not show every man to be entirely wicked:

"... mais remarquons que ces deux maux, l'un moral & l'autre physique, n'occupent pas toute l'Histoire ni toute l'expérience des particuliers: on trouve par tout & du bien moral & du bien physique; quelques exemples de vertu, et quelques exemples de bonheur; & c'est ce qui fait la difficulté."<sup>14</sup>

Such examples of virtue and happiness are not frequent, however, and Bayle maintained in several articles his conviction that evil exceeds virtue and misery exceeds happiness in this world.<sup>15</sup> Even men like Cicero<sup>16</sup> and La Mothe Le Vayer,<sup>17</sup> whose lives appear to have been fruitful and rewarding, would agree with him on this point, he believed. The latter, for example, had expressed a genuine reluctance to relive his life again, probably, Bayle surmised, because he was convinced his new life would be much the same as his present one. The miseries of this world are so oppressive that "il n'y a guere de rôles qui paroissent dignes d'être répétez sur le théâtre du monde à un homme de jugement."<sup>18</sup> Some men like Raphelengius<sup>19</sup> had spent the greater

---

14 Ibid.

15 LA MOTHE LE VAYER, RAPHELENGIUS, XENOPHANES for example.

16 TUPPIUS, note A.

17 VAYER, La Mothe Le, note F.

18 Ibid.

19 RAPHELENGIUS, note B.

part of their lives in a comfortable state of matrimony, deeply in love with their wives, and only a brief span suffering the miseries of being widowed. As a consequence, it might be concluded, Bayle tells us, that Raphelengius had a greater share of happiness than of misery. Such was not the case, however, for although he only spent three years as a widower, as against twenty-nine in happy marriage, in all probability he suffered more misery in those three years than he experienced in the previous twenty-nine. Even during his marriage there must have been crosses and sorrows to bear, for no marriage is purely a state of conjugal bliss. The conclusion is inescapable: this is a world filled with far more vice and misery than virtue and happiness. As final proof that Bayle's view of man accords with Calvin's teaching on predestination, we need only turn to the article XENOPHANES, where Bayle commented:

"Notez que toutes les choses que je viens de dire sont prêchées tous les jours, & cela sans qu'on prétende donner atteinte à l'Empire tout-puissant du Verbe incarné. On ne veut dire autre chose, & c'est aussi ma pensée, sinon que l'homme est de sa nature si porté au mal, qu'excepté le petit nombre d'élus, tous les autres hommes vivent & meurent aux gages de l'Esprit malin, sans que les soins paternels de Dieu pour les sauver puissent guerir leur malice, ni les amener à la repentance."<sup>20</sup>

It is this Calvinist emphasis on the excess of misery

---

20 XENOPHANES, note E.

over happiness in the world that is ultimately responsible for Bayle's denial of progress in history. This is yet another point at which we can identify him as belonging more precisely to the seventeenth rather than the eighteenth century, for although in one sense Bayle did take a tentative step along the path towards the eighteenth century, he very quickly drew back. He took this hesitant step in his attack on the 'ancients'. The authority of the 'ancients' was accepted traditionally because of the length of time through which their works and ideas had survived. In fact the very word 'ancient' inspired an idea of authority. Along with many of his contemporaries, Bayle maintained that the moderns were in fact more ancient than the 'ancients' since they had access to a far greater accumulation of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> He needed only to make the association between the advances in scientific knowledge of his own century and the advancement of material happiness, and he would have arrived at something approaching the modern view of progress. Nevertheless, he made no such association. The key to it was at his disposal in the writings of Francis Bacon,<sup>22</sup> which presumably he had read. He even included

---

21 CORCEONE, note F.

22 Bacon's view of knowledge and its utility is discussed fully in chapter II of J. B. Bury's The Idea of Progress, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1928, pp.50-63.

an article on Bacon in the Dictionnaire, but apparently perceived no significance in the idea that accumulated knowledge could give man the power to improve his material well-being. Instead, he fell back upon the traditional seventeenth century notion of happiness.

To begin with, he made the distinction in his notion of happiness between what he called its "efficient" causes and its "formal" state.<sup>23</sup> The "efficient" causes, under which heading he included such things as riches, science, honours, fame and virtue (knowledge, we may presume, would be included here) react only upon our senses, and are entirely external to our bodies. Such were the causes which the ancient philosophers identified as the true source of happiness. The "formal" state of happiness, however, is that necessary state of blessedness within us, which originates within our mind, and makes our soul (or "mind" - Bayle, like Montaigne, used the terms synonymously) truly happy. For an explanation of the cause of this "formal" state of happiness, Bayle revived an idea which he found so appealing in the philosophies of Malebranche and Descartes; the idea of "occasional" causes.<sup>24</sup> The "formal" state of happiness, which Bayle described as a feeling of ease, a sense of pleasure, and a

---

23 EPICURE, note H.

24 Although Brush maintains that Bayle abandoned his adherence to Malebranche's 'occasional' cause hypothesis during the latter's dispute with Arnauld in the mid-1680's, Bayle nevertheless drew heavily upon this idea to explain the complexities of the origin of evil in the Dictionnaire. In the light of Brush's research, however, this idea is probably more of a Cartesian legacy.

general satisfaction of mind, was identified accurately by Epicurus, under whose name the subject is discussed in the Dictionnaire.

Epicurus, made the significant mistake of believing that a selection of "efficient" causes could produce this "formal" state of happiness; causes such as those which preserve bodily health and prevent any uneasiness of the mind. According to Bayle, this philosopher's

chief mistake lay: "... en ne reconnoissant pas qu'il n'y a que Dieu qui puisse produire dans nôtre ame l'état qui la rend heureuse."<sup>25</sup>

Obviously then, to attain the "formal" state of happiness, men needed only to be subject to "occasional" causes, or ideas which react on the mind, and needed to have no reference to "efficient" causes which react solely on the external senses. If then, as Bayle implied, there is no necessary connection between sensation and ideas, what was the value and purpose of "efficient" causes?

Our sensations, which are the vehicles of pleasure, only react on the mind to produce happiness because God, who is the author of the union of the soul and body, has seen fit to allow this.<sup>26</sup> Working through the medium of "les loix de l'union de l'ame et du corps", God has permitted the soul (mind) to refer to the senses for an awareness of certain pains and pleasures, such as burning or tickling, in order more successfully to preserve the body from harm. These very laws can, in fact, produce a great diversity of reactions in men.

---

25 EPICURE, note H.

26 Ibid.

Frequently ideas resulting from the action of external stimuli upon the senses can contradict ideas resulting from "occasional" causes. Hobbes, for example, whose courage and steadiness related solely to objects of the mind, showed distinct fear at the prospect of physical pain. Montaigne, whose sceptical turn of mind would seem to have placed him above physical prejudice, was unable to witness a pullet's throat being cut or a hare being savaged by dogs. Such contradictions in men Bayle attributed to what he called "témperament".

Obviously God, who is unable to separate the being of a circle from the idea of a circle, can nevertheless separate body and soul, sensation and ideas: "Notre ame pourroit sentir du froid sans le raporter à un pied, ni à une main, tout comme elle sent la joie d'une bonne nouvelle & le chagrin, sans les raporter à aucune des parties du corps ... ."27 In other words, while bodily sensations are referred to the mind (soul), the mind need not refer to the body to experience sensations of its own. Happiness, then, emanates from God, either directly, or through the "occasional" cause of an idea for which He is ultimately responsible. We should not enquire too deeply into the manner in which God effects such causes in the distribution of happiness and misery, for what at first may appear as adversity, may in time, well result in prosperity. Antony Panormita

---

27 Ibid.



was sufficiently wise to realise that the causes of happiness and unhappiness are hidden from our scrutiny.<sup>28</sup> Bayle's all too familiar conclusion concerning the inscrutable ways of God, is once again offered to us: "C'est par la Révélation que l'on peut s'en débarrasser."<sup>29</sup>

Thus in making true happiness a divinely inspired state of mind, Bayle precluded rational knowledge as a key to happiness, and therefore as a means to the achievement of progress. His powers of historical observation left no room for a belief in the idea. If he needed further evidence of man's failure to progress through accumulated knowledge, he had only to turn to the lessons of history. From the time of Emma, wife of Ethelred, through the barbarities committed in Europe between 1345 and 1390, to the horrors of the French Wars of Religion and the persecutions which followed upon the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, it was clear that man had made little or no progress in dispelling the evils of superstition and ignorance.<sup>30</sup>

---

28 PANORMITA, note H.

29 Ibid.

30 P. J. S. Whitmore in his thesis "The use made of English Thought and History in the works of Pierre Bayle, with Special Reference to the Dictionnaire", p.9, claims that many of Bayle's criticisms were levelled at the twin evils of superstition and ignorance.

His historical observations and his denial of progress led Bayle to adopt a cyclical view of history, once again betraying his indebtedness to seventeenth century historical traditions. He saw the pattern of historical development as one of undulation and repetition:

"Prenez l'Histoire [humaine] par quelque bout qu'il vous plaira, & suivez-en les progrès depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin, vous verrez ... . Le monde est un véritable jeu de bascule; tour à tour on y monte & on y descend. On doit admirer dans ce jeu-là les profondeurs d'une sage Providence, & l'activité de nos passions."<sup>31</sup>

This was essentially a statement of the "antique-modern" view of history, which received its currency during the Renaissance from the ideas of Machiavelli,<sup>32</sup> and was widely accepted by French historians in the seventeenth century. In The Prince, Machiavelli presented a picture of human beings acting out their drama on the unchanging stage of Earth, with nature as a backdrop. Men appeared merely as different mixtures of the same basic ingredients, the same basic compounds.

"... il y a des vices qui sont de tous païs, & de toute Religion, & de tout Siècle ... . Notons aussie qu'il y a de bonnes actions, dont on trouve des exemples dans chaques païs, dans chaques siècle, & dans chaque Religion."<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, the historical narrative is the same, regardless of the

---

31 ESCOPE, note I.

32 For a discussion of this point, see H. Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science. 2nd. ed. London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1962, pp.210-18.

33 AVERROES, note P.

period of history under review. In fact a panoramic view of history would reveal a similar picture in all ages: "Le pis est qu'on ne profite pas du passé: chaque génération fournit les mêmes symptômes, tantôt plus grans, tantôt plus petits."<sup>34</sup> In excluding the possibility of progress in history, Bayle did not wish to present a picture of a world growing steadily more wicked and degenerate. The repetitive view of history is a denial of both progress and regress in the absolute sense. It is in fact a completely static view of history:

"C'est une erreur que de croire que le monde va toujours de mal en pis; car il est certain que le Siècle où nous vivons ne nous fait pas voir dans l'Occident une suite d'enormitez en peu d'années semblable à celle que l'on y trouve depuis l'an 1345 jusqu'en 1390."<sup>35</sup>

While Bayle's acceptance of the cyclical view of history places him in the mainstream of seventeenth century historical thought, his point of departure lies in his rejection of the traditional explanation of causation generally associated with the theory. Its most usual exponents were the ecclesiastical historians, who ascribed a considerable, if not absolute, deterministic role to Providence as an

---

34 AMYRAUT, note F.

35 NAPLES, Jeanne I de, note O.

explanation of causation. Bayle, as we have seen, held firmly to his opinion that both God and man must be considered equally as causal factors. On the one hand, when discussing the Reformation, he remarked: "Il faut admirer dans cette conduite le doigt de Dieu. C'est le pere commun de tous les Peuples, il donne dans un Siecle à une Nation les bénédictions temporelles, qu'il lui ôte dans un autre Siecle."<sup>36</sup> while on the other hand, he made pointed reference to man's unruly passions as a factor in causation: "Il y a peu de grandes affaires, qui ne réussissent pour le moins autant par les fautes de l'un des partis, que par la prudence de l'autre."<sup>37</sup> In dividing causation thus, between man and God, Bayle was then pressed to provide some explanation of the respective roles of each. The solution he proposed was, to say the least, something less than exact.

We find part of his answer in note B.B to the article LUTHER, where he remarked: "Sans recourir aux constellations, l'asyle ordinaire de l'ignorance, on eût pu trouver sur la terre les causes secondes dont Dieu se servit pour le changement qui arriva en Allemagne au XVI Siecle."<sup>38</sup> Clearly Bayle saw God as the prime mover, working His mysterious ways through general laws: "Dieu sur la terre, entant que dispensateur des événements, & distributeur des bons succès & des malheurs, n'a pas moins soumis aux Lois générales la vertu & l'innocence, que la santé et les richesses."<sup>39</sup>

---

36 NAPLES, Alphonse I<sup>er</sup> de, note A.

37 AUTRICHE, note F.

38 LUTHER, note B.B.

39 BRUTUS, M. J., note D.

while man and his environment were to have freedom within the framework of these general laws to act as second causes. By this means, he sought to extricate himself from the difficulty of having Providence direct everything down to the minutest detail of our lives. This solution was not an original one, however, for almost the same explanation of causation can be found in the XXVth. chapter of The Prince: "... I think that it may be true that fortune is the ruler of half our actions, but that she allows the other half or thereabouts to be governed by us."<sup>40</sup> This lack of clarity which Bayle exhibited in defining the respective causal roles of God and man beyond "general laws" and "second causes" was not without its purpose, but to fully appreciate this, we must have recourse once again to his arguments in defence of toleration, in particular those concerned with Providence, free-will and the origin of evil.

In his attack on religious orthodoxy, Bayle's intention was not so much to deny Providential determinism absolutely, as to deny the ability of man's reason to comprehend it. By this means he hoped to weaken the position of the rationalist theologians in their attempts to define religious orthodoxy. If the attainment of orthodoxy were placed beyond reason, all religious sects would then be

---

40 Nicolò Machiavelli, The Prince and Other Pieces, taken from the English translation of 1674. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1883, p.153.

obliged to respect each other's opinions, as well as the opinions of the individual conscience. The claim of religious orthodoxy was one of the principal justifications of persecution. Frequently, religious sects had interpreted their success as a sign of Providential favour, and had argued their orthodoxy, and their right to persecute heretics, from this: "Ils se flatent ... que le ciel se déclarera pour eux ... ."41 The ignorance and superstition of some men had easily enabled them to give ready credence to explanations of adversity and good fortune which point to the guiding hand of God: "... ceux qui condamnent une pratique, ont accoutumé de supposer que les prodiges celestes se déclarent en leur faveur. Ils persuadent cela aisément, & ils tiennent ainsi les esprits dans la servitude."42 It is absurd, we are told elsewhere, for Christians to reason in such a manner, especially when texts from the Bible are used as a basis for such arguments, because in the New Testament, in particular 1 and 2 Timothy, we find only contradictory teachings:

"Qu'il me soit permis de dire un mot sur l'inconstance des raisonnemens de l'homme, à l'égard de l'adversité & de la prospérité. On a là-dessus des Maximes toutes opposées. On vous dira, & que ceux qui veulent vivre selon la piété souffriront persécution, & que la piété a les promesses de la vie présente & de celle qui est à venir."43

---

41 BRUTUS, M. J., note D.

42 NAOGEORGUS, note C.

43 MAHOMET II, note D.

Regardless of the obvious contradictions of such biblical texts, there is no doubt that Christians used the favour of Providence as a justification of persecution:

"Ne voit-on pas qu'aussitôt que les Chrétiens furent en état de persécuter, ils reprochèrent à l'erreur les mêmes choses que le Paganisme leur avoit attribuées, c'est-à-dire, d'être la cause qu'on ne faisoit pas de bonnes récoltes, & qu'on voioit un renversement de saisons."<sup>44</sup>

Although he remained a sincere Calvinist, Bayle's faith in the ability of reason to resolve theological questions had been destroyed early in his life. It is not surprising, then, that the only answer he could find against such rational arguments for persecution lay in the adoption of some degree of fideism; he had to show the inability of man's reason to comprehend the divine workings of Providence. At this point, we can now press on to an analysis of that subject which caused such a furore when the Dictionnaire was first published in 1696<sup>45</sup> - the origin of evil.

Bayle's excuse for including a discussion of this subject in several of the articles has not as yet, in my opinion, been satisfactorily explained. As Craig B. Brush has observed, it is one of the truly original aspects of the Dictionnaire.<sup>46</sup> Bayle had hinted at it in some of his earlier works, but it was not until 1696

---

44 VERGERIUS, note C.

45 In Brush, Montaigne and Bayle, p.250 the date of this first edition is shown as 1679, but this is obviously a misprint.

46 Ibid., p.303.

that he published a full discussion of the subject. W. H. Barber has commented upon the fact that there was a revival of interest in the origin of evil around the year 1690, about the time when Bayle commenced work on the Dictionnaire.<sup>47</sup> Barber makes reference to Bossuet's Histoire des variations des Eglises protestantes (1688) and Basnage's Histoire de la religion des Eglises réformées (1690), as well as the reviews of both Basnage's book and Bishop Stillingfleet's Origine Sacrae in the Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants for 1690. He also mentions De Origine Mali (1702), a book by William King, later Archbishop of Dublin, concerned exclusively with the origin of evil. King's book, however, postdated the first edition of the Dictionnaire by some six years, and can have had no influence on Bayle's original ideas. While the other works may well have drawn his attention to the subject of evil, it seems to me hardly likely that a rigorous scholar like Bayle would have been drawn to expend so much time and energy on a mere theological digression.

The answer is not to be found, either, in the opinion of those who contend like H. T. Mason, that Bayle was confessing his own belief in the Manichean heresy. Undoubtedly the force with which Bayle

---

47 Barber, Leibniz in France, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955, pp. 70-72.



presented the Manichean position was sufficient excuse for a number of his contemporaries to accuse him of a belief in this heresey.<sup>48</sup> In 1699, Leclerc answered Bayle's explanation of Manicheanism with his Parrhasiana, in which he posited the views of Origen as a satisfactory explanation of the origin of evil. A further attack was launched in 1705 by Jaquelot, and of course in 1710 there appeared Leibniz's famous Theodicy. Nevertheless, a rigid analysis of Bayle's treatment of the problem of evil leaves no room for acceptance of current opinions like those of Mason.

If, however, we consider Bayle's discussion of this subject in the light of his defence of toleration, its inclusion in the Dictionnaire assumes a new importance. In the first place, both the problems of the workings of Providence and of free-will were indissolubly linked to the origin of evil. If the responsibility for the first sin is attributed to man alone, does this not ascribe to him the divine attribute of real and absolute freedom? If the responsibility was God's, does this not have the effect of denying His supreme goodness? Moreover, is it not then still possible to argue that if God is the source of both good and evil, that victory will be the reward of the virtuous and defeat the just punishment of the wicked? And from this, is it not then valid to argue the right to persecute the weak and

---

48 Barber makes this point, but also denies that Bayle was a Manichean believer, *ibid.*, p.71.

vanquished from the justice of the successful cause? Secondly, this problem concerns the very essence of causation - the responsibility for the first historical act. Bayle's denial of absolute Providential determinism could not hope to rest until he resolved the problem of evil, for just as it threatened the very basis of Christianity if left unresolved, it also threatened to undermine the very basis of Bayle's defence of toleration. The final solution which he offered for the problem is yet a further emphasis of that argument which he used so frequently against religious orthodoxy and in favour of individual conscience - that the workings of divine Providence, inaccessible to reason, could only be comprehended through revelation. In these terms, then, Bayle's inclusion of a discussion of the origin of evil no longer appears as a mere theological digression; it becomes a subject of paramount importance to one of his primary motives in writing the Dictionnaire.

Bayle set about his examination of the question by isolating the three principal conclusions to which man's reason has led him concerning the origin of evil: the dualist heresy; Origen's notion of free-will; and the Christian idea of the Devil. The dualist heresy, whose chief adherents were Plato, Zoroaster and the Christian sects of the Marcionites of the second century, the Manichees of the third and the Paulicans of the seventh, was the most formidable, for as Bayle set out to prove, it was the one which

accorded most readily with reason and experience. The free-will argument for which Origen, the third century theologian was the most ardent advocate, and the Christian idea of the Devil could not withstand the rational objections of the dualists. By a subtle use of pyrrhonism, Bayle reduced all rational explanations of the origin of evil, with the exception of the dualist heresy, to impotence, and the dualist explanation he opposed with fideistic arguments inspired by Calvin's teachings.

In PERICLES note K, Bayle acquaints us with the source of the Manichean idea of the two principles, the separate and eternal, good and evil Gods:

"C'est donc ainsi que l'esprit de l'homme, trop borné pour comprendre clairement que les miseres & les crimes, dont la terre est toute couverte, puissent compatir avec l'être infiniment bon, s'est précipité dans l'Hypothese des deux principes."<sup>49</sup>

In the article MANICHEENS itself, Bayle displayed the considerable potency of the dualist heresy. The real strength of the dualist sects, and of the pagan philosophers for that matter, lay in not using 'a priori' but 'a posteriori' reasoning. Had these people used the deductive process, the early Church Fathers might easily have routed them, for we know by this technique that our understanding of orders teaches us that God, the eternal Being, must be "unique, infini, tout-puissant, & doué de toutes sortes de perfections."<sup>50</sup> This makes an absurdity of a system based upon two independent principles, the

---

49 PERICLES, note K.

50 MANICHEENS, note D.

one infinitely good, the other infinitely evil. If 'a priori' reasoning were alone used, neither the Manicheans nor the pagan philosophers would have an answer to this. Inductive reasoning, however, requires two things of every philosophical system to make it satisfactory, "... l'une que les idées en soient distinctes, l'autre qu'il puisse donner raison des expériences."<sup>51</sup> When the Manicheans endeavoured to prove from all the physical opposites in the world, for example heat-cold, white-black, light-darkness, that our experience contradicts the idea of a single God, they were on weak ground:

"On donne raison de toutes ces choses, ou par les diverses facultez que Dieu a données aux corps, ou par les loix du mouvement qu'il a établies, ou par le concours des causes occasionelles intelligentes, sur lesquelles il lui a plu de se régler."<sup>52</sup>

The Cartesian theory of "occasional" causes was entirely adequate to explain the opposites in physical bodies. Everything, with the exception of man himself, declared for the glory and unity of God:

"l'homme seul, dis-je, fournit de très-grandes Objections contre l'unité de Dieu."<sup>53</sup> It was the mixture of vice and virtue, happiness and unhappiness in man which afforded the strongest evidence for the theory of the two principles.

To underline the impossibility of overturning the dualist theory by reason, Bayle invented a dialogue between two pagan philosophers,

---

51 Ibid.

52 MANICHEENS, note D.

53 Ibid.

Melissus, who held to one principle, and Zoroaster, who held to two.<sup>54</sup> At every turn, Melissus was thwarted in his arguments by Zoroaster according to the principles of 'a posteriori' reasoning, for Zoroaster's theory was not only rationally sound, but it also accorded with what experience teaches us about the existence of good and evil in the world. Melissus might have raised a thousand objections, but Zoroaster would have answered them all without ever being converted to the idea of the unity of God. There was an answer, however, which the Church Fathers might have posed to the Manicheans, who admitted the divine inspiration of the new Testament. The Manicheans might have been convinced of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament with little difficulty, and there one can find ample evidence for the unity of God and His infinite perfections:

"Qu'on nous vienne dire avec un grand appareil de raisonnemens, qu'il n'est pas possible que le mal moral s'introduise dans le monde, par l'ouvrage d'un Principe infiniment bon & saint, nous répondrons que cela s'est pourtant fait, & par conséquent que cela est très-possible. Il n'y a rien de plus insensé que de raisonner contre des faits."<sup>55</sup>

Leaving aside for the moment the question of 'probabilism' which is raised by Brush,<sup>56</sup> if we are prepared to accept the first of Popin's

---

54 Ibid.

55 MANICHEENS, note D.

56 Brush claims that Bayle's position of grace (or revelation) is that while grace is totally reliable, it cannot be positively identified. This, according to Brush, is at best a 'probabilist' position, which makes Bayle technically not a fideist, but a semi-fideist. Cf. opp. cit., pp.299-301. I will discuss this more fully in a later chapter.

definitions of fideism, that it is:

"... blind faith, which denies to reason any capacity whatsoever to reach the truth, or to make it plausible, and which bases all certitude on a complete and unquestioning adherence to some revealed or accepted truths ... ."57

then Bayle's stand on the origin of evil was almost certainly fideistic. As further evidence for this, we find elsewhere in the Dictionnaire an examination of two alternative attempts, this time by early Church Fathers, to refute the dualist heresy by 'a priori' reasoning; the first is Lactantius's answer to Epicurus,<sup>58</sup> and the second St. Basil's attempt to refute the Manicheans.<sup>59</sup>

Bayle quotes to us a passage from Lactantius's de Ira Dei in which it was claimed that God introduced evil in order that man should know wisdom, virtue and goodness. Scripturally this is nonsense, Bayle tells us, for it contradicts what we are told in the Bible about the delicious pleasures of the Garden of Eden and the fact that without the first sin, Adam and Eve might have enjoyed these forever. Even philosophically it does not bear close scrutiny, for there is no sound reason why man should be obliged to experience one contrary sensation in order to be able to appreciate the other. We must have recognised pleasure, if that came

---

57 Richard H. Popkin, The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes, Assen: van Gorcum and Comp., 1960, p.xiv.

58 PAULICIENS, note E.

59 Ibid; see also MARCONITES, note F.

first, as being comfortable, or pain as being uncomfortable, before experiencing the other. It cannot even validly be maintained that pain becomes bearable after a sustained period of pleasure. Although custom blunts the edges of our sensations and reduces the degree of the stimulus, if that degree is sustained our comfort or discomfort will remain at the same level. All of this reasoning is confirmed by Christian theology which tells us of the eternal suffering of damnation and the eternal pleasures of Paradise. There is little that our reason can do against the 'a posteriori' arguments of the dualists. Theirs is a fortress impregnable to all but the weapon of revelation:

"Qui n'admirera & qui ne déplorera la destinée de notre Raison? Voilà les Manichéens qui, avec une Hypothese tout-à-fait absurde & contradictoire, expliquent les expériences cent fois mieux que ne font les Orthodoxes, avec la supposition si juste, si nécessaire, si uniquement véritable d'un premier principe infiniment bon & tout-puissant."60

St. Basil fared no better with his hypothesis. He endeavoured to vindicate God by claiming that sin had its origin in the soul of man. But if man was the creation of an infinitely holy and infinitely powerful Being, should he not also be good? Did it still not reflect on God that a creature of His own creation should be the source of evil? The advice Bayle had for St. Basil

---

60 PAULICIENS, note E.

was that:

"... il devoit se retirer dans son fort, c'est-à-dire qu'il devoit prouver par la Parole de Dieu que l'auteur de toutes choses est unique & infini en bonté & en toutes sortes de perfections ..."61

As long as one's adversary can be persuaded of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament, he can have no answers to your objections. The Manicheans, indeed all the heretical Christian dualist sects, could be completely refuted on this level (only the pagan philosophers Zoroaster, Plato or Plutarch would be more difficult to convince). In the Old Testament, Isaiah, chapter iv, verse 8, we are told that the ways of God are not our ways. This surely should be enough to silence any quarrels over the origin of evil.<sup>62</sup>

Those like Origen, the third century theologian, who posed man's free-will as the source of evil would also be easily refuted by the Manicheans. Origen's hypothesis rested on three fundamental propositions:

"I. 'Dieu nous a fait libres, pour donner lieu à la Vertu, & au Vice, au blâme & à la louange, & à la recompense & aux peines'. II. Il 'ne damne personne simplement pour avoir peché, mais pour ne s'être pas repenti'. III. 'Les maux physiques & moraux' du genre humain sont d'une durée si courte en comparaison de l'éternité, qu'ils ne peuvent pas empêcher que Dieu ne passe 'pour bienfaisant & pour ami de la vertu'."63

---

61 Ibid.

62 Bayle made his position clear on revelation being the answer to the dualists in PAULICIENS, note E where he said: "Tenez-vous-en donc là; c'est un Texte de l'Ecriture, & ne venez plus raisonner."

63 ORIGENE, note E.



The last proposition is the most significant, for in it Origen supposed that the damnation in Hell, after several ages, would cease and the damned would be rendered eternally happy by God, which would accord with His infinite mercy, for several centuries of suffering would be nothing compared with eternal Paradise. To illustrate the weakness of this hypothesis, Bayle answered it as he supposed a Manichean would have done.

In the first place, our idea of goodness only extends to perfect goodness, especially when considered in relation to the infinite goodness of God. It is inconceivable that God in His infinite benevolence, would give man the gift of free-will in the knowledge that man would use it to his own ruin and the eternal damnation of the greatest part of his posterity. It is not even conceivable that God could do this in the knowledge that man would be redeemed after several centuries. Rather, if God had granted man complete free-will, His infinite love for virtue would have prompted Him to hinder the evil tendencies of this free-will. As for the idea that free-will exists to make room for virtue and vice, praise and reproach, reward and punishment, Origen would have to admit that virtue, praise and reward could exist without their contraries since he admitted that eventually all creatures shall live in a state of felicity.

Secondly, since impenitence merely results from the bad use of free-will, there is little difference between saying that God punishes men for impenitence or for having sinned.

As for the third and last premise, the Manichean has no difficulty in answering this. Apart from the fact that an Originist would be reluctant to measure the exact duration of Hell's torments, it matter little how long they are. A minute, a hundred years, a million years or eternity, such torments would still be a denial of the infinite goodness of God:

"Vous ne pouvez donc parvenir à la suprême bonté de Dieu, qu'en supprimant jusqu'à la dernière minute les supplices des enfers. Car ce que Dieu peut être un moment, il le peut être deux heures, & deux siècles, & dans toute l'éternité; mais ce qui seroit incompatible avec sa nature dans l'éternité, l'est aussi dans chaque instant de la durée des choses."<sup>64</sup>

There was no resolving the difficulty by reason for the Manicheans were firmly entrenched with their 'a posteriori' objections, and Origen would have been well advised to accept this.

The third and final hypothesis advanced for the origin of evil was the traditional Christian notion that the Devil is the first principle of evil. Christian theology tells us that:

"... le Diable est l'auteur de toutes les fausses Religions; que c'est lui qui pousse les Hérétiques à dogmatiser, que c'est lui qui inspire les erreurs, les superstitions, les schismes, l'impudicité, l'avarice, l'intempérance, en un mot tous les crimes qui se commettent parmi les hommes; que c'est lui qui fit perdre à Eve & à son mari l'état d'innocence: d'où s'ensuit qu'il est la source du mal moral, & la cause de tous les malheurs de l'homme. Il est donc le premier principe du mal ... ."<sup>65</sup>

Satan himself, however, was once an angel of God, and consequently

---

64 Ibid.

65 PAULICIENS, note H.

an instrument of God's creation. Since he was created, he cannot be eternal, and we must conclude, therefore, that God and not the Devil is the first principle of evil. Once again the problem defies rational solution, and we are obliged to have recourse to revelation.

Bayle's repeated conclusion that revelation offers the only solution to the problem of evil emphasises his need to leave the respective roles of man and God in causation so ill-defined. To attempt to rationalize a finer definition of these respective roles would be to negate one of the principal arguments he used in defence of toleration. A mistake that is sometimes made by students of Bayle when examining the objections he raised to the three hypotheses on the origin of evil is to be misled into thinking that he was launching a general attack on religion. He was not proposing dualism as a legitimate hypothesis,<sup>66</sup> neither did he reject man's free-will, nor disbelieve that the Devil was responsible for much of the sin in the world. The objections which he raises are only hypothetically designed to highlight the utter futility for using reason rather than revelation to resolve this theological problem. This is fideism, to be sure, but as a conclusion it is also orthodox Calvinism. If we need further evidence

---

66 See the "Eclaircissement sur les Manichéens" at the end of the Dictionnaire for a further explanation of this.

of Bayle's adherence to the teachings of his faith, we need only turn to the article SYNERGISTES.

In this article Bayle touched upon the dispute between Melanchthon and Calvin over the questions of free-will and predestination.<sup>67</sup> Both men agreed on the basic premise that of two doctrines, the one which most accorded with Scripture and the glory of God should be preferred. Melanchthon, however, was convinced that man has a free-will which is required by the very goodness, holiness and justice of God. Calvin, on the other hand, upheld the doctrine of Necessity, or predestination, which was required by the supreme empire of God over all things. In answering Melanchthon's objections to Calvin's arguments, Bayle paraphrased Calvin's teachings in a passage which is rather long, but is nevertheless worth quoting, since it confirms that the fideistic stand which Bayle took on the origin of evil is nothing more than the most purely orthodox Calvinist theology. Here is what he says:

"Quand même vous prouveriez invinciblement à un prédestinateur, que son Système est lié nécessairement & inévitablement avec cette conséquence, donc Dieu est l'auteur du péché, vous devriez vous contenter de cette réponse à l'égard de sa personne: je vois aussi bien que vous la liaison de mon principe avec cette conséquence, & ma Raison qui la voit ne me fournit point assez de lumieres, pour me faire comprendre comment je me trompe en voyant cela; mais je ne laisse pas d'être fortement persuadé, que Dieu trouve dans les thrésors infinis de sa sagesse un moien certain de rompre cette liaison, un moien, dis-je, certain & très-infaillible, quoi qu'il me soit inconnu, & qu'il surpasse toute la portée de mes lumieres. Un Chrétien se doit piquer principalement de

---

67 SYNERGISTES, note B.

soumission à l'autorité de Dieu. Ne pas croire ce qu'on voit, doit être souvent sa devise aussi bien que croire ce qu'on ne voit pas. Voilà dans le fond le sens du Passage de Calvin que l'on vient de lire. Malanchthon, & tout autre Théologien fauteur de la liberté, auroit d'autant plus mauvaise grace de ne pas acquiescer à cette Réponse, qu'ils sont contraints de recourir à un semblable dénouement; car dès qu'ils ont tant soit peu de bonne foi, ils reconnoissent que la manière dont la providence de Dieu, & sa prescience, sont liées avec la liberté de la créature, leur est incompréhensible. On les pousse donc dans les mêmes précipices où ils ont poussé les autres, ils se sauvent à leur tour dans l'asyle de l'incompréhensibilité de la nature de Dieu, à l'égard de la foiblesse de notre petite Raison."<sup>68</sup>

We can confirm the accuracy of this paraphrase by turning to Calvin's Treatise of Predestination, where we will find the following passage:

"The faithful indeed make these two things agree with one another; that the state of man was so constituted at his creation that in stumbling and falling of his own will he was the cause of his own ruin; and that nevertheless he was thus determined by the admirable wisdom of God, to the end that the voluntary ruin of Adam should be a reason for humility to all his race. For although God knew that this was expedient, it does not follow that man was not ruined by his own fault, who had otherwise been endowed with a good nature and formed in the image of God. I say once again, that I know well enough what an appearance of absurdity and contradiction this presents to profane people and those who despise God."<sup>69</sup>

Calvin did not deny that God must be owned the first principle of evil, but emphasised that the responsibility for original sin was man's, stemming from his misuse of free-will. As to why God should have given man the gift of free-will, in the knowledge that man would use it to evil ends, we can only affirm that it "is hidden in His closest counsel, and it is our duty to know nothing but in moderation."

---

<sup>68</sup> SYNERGISTES, note B.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in François Wendel, Calvin. London: Collins (Fontana), 1956, pp.186-7.

The article SYNERGISTES is fruitful in another respect, for it serves to show the close relationship between Bayle's plea for toleration and his fideistic stand on the theological problems of free-will, the origin of evil and the controlling influence of a benevolent Providence. Throughout note B, Bayle emphasized his admiration for Melanchthon's moderation and tolerant spirit in his dispute with Calvin. He was always ready to do justice to Calvin's opinions, and never allowed their differences to loosen the bonds of fraternity between them. He was such a modest and humble disputant, that Bayle was moved to assert: "Voilà ce que tout le monde devroit imiter." It was his tolerant spirit of Melanchthon's which served as an excuse for Bayle to include the following comment on the need for toleration:

"Chaque Secte impute à l'autre d'enseigner des impiétez & des blasphêmes horribles, & pousse l'animosité jusques aux dernieres bornes: & néanmoins c'est sur de telles doctrines que l'on devroit pratiquer le plus promptement une tolérance mutuelle. On pardonneroit l'intolérance à un Parti qui prouveroit clairement ses opinions, & qui répondroit aux difficultez nettement, catégoriquement, & d'une maniere convaincante; mais que des gens qui sont obligez de dire qu'ils n'ont point de meilleure solution à donner que des secrets impénétrables à l'esprit humain, & cachez dans les thrésors infinis de l'immensité incompréhensible de Dieu; que de telles gens, dis-je, fassent les fiers, lancent la foudre de l'anathême, bannissent, pendent, c'est ce qui paroît inexcusable Melanchthon étoit plus humain. Il ne croioit pas que ceux qui nient la liberté fussent indignes de l'éloge de bons serviteurs de Dieu, il les excusoit sur l'obscurité de la matiere, & sur la bonté de leur motifs."<sup>70</sup>

Bayle took great pains and considerable space to show that there was

---

70 SYNERGISTES, note B.

no satisfactory rational explanation of the divine workings of Providence. God's ways are generally inscrutable, and any knowledge which man has of such questions as free-will, the origin of evil and Providential determinism must emanate from revelation. Therefore all men should admit the impenetrability of these mysteries to human reason, and abandon all claims to orthodoxy, from which basis so many were inclined to argue their right to persecute.

To this point we have seen how the reasoning behind Bayle's defence of toleration has determined his general view of causation, one in which both man and God are allotted separate, though ill-defined roles. But what does Bayle have to say of the more specific issues of causation when he discussed the various wars, revolutions, political and religious upheavals of history? Just as he would not allow that God specifically determines the life of every man, neither would he allow that the life of every man has a significant influence on history. It is not the ordinary man, but the 'great' man, who plays the most influential role in history.

Bayle was still prepared to admit that Providence, in a general way, can have a significant influence on 'great' men and, consequently, on the course of history. For example, in the article FRANCOIS I<sup>er</sup> he admitted that God played a considerable part in establishing the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century:

"Comme il est plus conforme aux principes de la Religion & de la piété, de reconoitre le doigt de Dieu, je veux dire une

influence particuliere de la Providence dans l'établissement de la Réforme, j'aprouve ceux qui en jugent ainsi ... ."71

Nevertheless, as we learn elsewhere:

"Sans recourir aux constellations, l'asyle ordinaire de l'ignorance, on eût pu trouver sur la terre les causes secondes dont Dieu se servit pour le changement qui arriva en Allemagne au XVI siecle."72

The 'second causes' of which Bayle speaks are none other than human passions, those important psychological factors which can obscure reason, and upon which he placed so much emphasis:

"L'un des principaux moiens dont Dieu s'est servi pour l'établissement du Protestantisme, & dont il se sert encore pour la faire prospérer, est la jalousie naturelle de la France & de la Maison d'Autiche. Tour à tour chacune de ces deux Puissances a mieux aimé travailler à l'avantage des Protestans, afin de nuire à sa rivale, que de souffrir l'agrandissement de sa rivale sur les ruines des Protestans."73

This natural rivalry between Charles V and Francis I was more than sufficient to establish the Reformation, since by turns they each showed favour towards Luther's sect, thus allowing it to become firmly established on German soil, and once established, to send supplies and aid to the French Calvinists.<sup>74</sup> As Bayle remarked on another occasion, it was not uncommon for "les grandes Révolutions d'Etat" to proceed from "une fantaisie, ou ... un sot caprice de quelques particuliers."<sup>75</sup> However, because Bayle was prepared to

---

71 FRANCOIS I<sup>er</sup>, note P.

72 LUTHER, note B.B.

73 ELISABETH, note G.

74 FRANCOIS I<sup>er</sup>, note P.

75 DRUSUS, Marc Livius, note D.



admit that the workings of Providence lay behind the Reformation, he was careful to preclude the possibility of any direct action by God to favour one cause or another. Human passions are equivocal and one should not deduce from a 'great man's' actions the favour or otherwise of Providence. Despite what the gospel teaches us, that the blindness, rashness and folly of men are frequently the effect of a particular providence, and that equally prudence, wisdom, resolution and understanding are inspired by Providence, this need not be necessarily so: "... d'un côté l'on nomme malheur ce qui quelquefois est une suite de l'imprudence, on donne de l'autre le nom de bonheur à ce qui est quelquefois un effet de la prudence."<sup>76</sup> In other words, a man who appears to be acting rashly may in fact be basing his actions upon considerable strategy and policy.

On the other hand, a prince may be lured into rash action by intemperate counsellors. Such was the fate of Amphiaraus, who allowed himself to be drawn into a disastrous war by his foolish counsellor Tideus.<sup>77</sup> However, secular counsellors are not always the most dangerous: "L'Auteur d'un Dictionnaire Historique auroit mille & mille occasions de remarquer, qu'il n'y a point de plus grans flateurs des Puissances, que les gens d'Eglise."<sup>78</sup> In EMMA, Bayle cautioned the rulers of his own day with regard both the secular and ecclesiastical counselling:

---

76 TIMOLEON, note K.

77 AMPHIARUS, note L.

78 ALPAIDE, note C.

"Il est certain que ceux qui sont sur le trône ont plus de besoin que les autres du secours du tempérament pour devenir saints. S'ils n'ont point reçu de la nature un esprit simple, doux, benin, humble, ils conçoivent des passions qui les engagent à une conduite peu conforme à la perfection Chrétienne; mais avec les qualitez que j'ai marquées, ils se laissent conduire comme des moutons à leurs directeurs spirituels, & ce sont de grandes avances pour obtenir un jour à la Cour de Rome la béatification, & ce qui s'ensuit."<sup>79</sup>

If the terrible events of the sixteenth century were not enough to underline this lesson, Bayle's own times furnished him with sufficient examples to make him particularly cautious of clerical advisers. On the one hand, he believed that Louis XIV's Jesuit advisers were responsible for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, while of the other he sensed the danger of fanatical Huguenot ministers like Pierre Jurieu gaining the ear of William of Orange to engage his assistance in a religious war against Catholic France. If we require conclusive proof of the relationship between Bayle's plea for toleration and his view of causation, we need only turn to the article MACON where he drew important lessons from the religious wars of the sixteenth century.<sup>80</sup> The history of these wars, he tells us, should be a continual lesson to three types of people: those who govern; those who conduct ecclesiastical affairs; and those turbulent divines who take so much pleasure in innovations. To the first group he addressed this remark:

---

79 EMMA, note A.

80 See chap. II, pp.29-45.

"Ne tourmentez personne sur ses opinions de Religion, & n'étendez pas le droit du glaive sur la conscience. Volez ce que Charles IX & son Successeur y gagnerent; c'est un vrai miracle que la Monarchie Françoise n'ait point péri pour leur Catholicité. Il n'arrivera pas tous les jours de tels miracles, ne vous y fiez point. On ne voulut pas laisser en repos l'Edit de Janvier, & il falut après plus de trente ans de desolation, après mille & mille torrens de sang repandus, mille & mille perfidies & incendies, en accorder un plus favorable."81

and to the second group he said:

"Vous ne voulez pas ... que cette Secte prie Dieu à sa mode, ni qu'elle prêche ses sentimens; mais prenez garde, si l'on en vient aux épées tirées, qu'au lieu de parler & d'écrire contre vos dogmes, elle ne renverse vos Temples, & ne mette vos propres personnes en danger. Que gagnâtes-vous en France & en Hollande en conseillant la persecution? Ne vous fiez point à votre grand nombre. Vous Souverains ont des voisins, & par conséquent vos Sectaires ne manqueront, ni de protecteurs, ni d'assistance, fussent-ils Turcs."82

To the third group, Bayle offered the warning that although their intemperance would not produce the horrors of persecution which had arisen from the disputes between Catholics and Protestants, the mischief it would cause was sufficient to make it detestable.

As far as the human element in causation is concerned, Bayle goes beyond his generalizations about 'great' men, to analyse the motivation of the individual. He is interesting for his deep concern with the human mind, and indentified human passions and the psychological intricacies of "tempérament" as the greatest spurs to action, and the most usual causes of intolerance in all men, be they generals, clerics or princes: "Le tempérament

---

81 MACON, note C.

82 Ibid.

est presque toujours le premier & le principal mobile dans les personnes mêmes qui font ici bas l'oeuvre de Dieu."<sup>83</sup>

While a meek, gentle and humble monarch may be easily led by his spiritual dictators, a strong prince will frequently act against his own interests because of some secret passion. For this reason, princes themselves are not entirely blameless of persecution. Thus: "... le Roi d'Espagne, tout grand politique qu'il étoit, aimoit mieux perdre le Païs-Bas, que de ne point satisfaire les jalousies & autres passions cachées qui lui rongeoient l'ame."<sup>84</sup> Louis XI of France was another example of a king:

"... si aveugle qu'il laissa échaper cette occasion, la plus glorieuse & la plus avantageuse que le Ciel lui pût offrir ... . Cela montre que les Monarques ne tournent pas toujours leurs passions selon le vent de leur intérêt ... il ont tout comme les particuliers certaines passions secretes, ou certaines antipathies, qui en quelques rencontres ne leur permettent pas de se gouverner autrement que selon l'instinct de cette disposition ... ."<sup>85</sup>

Louis had allowed his deep hatred for the Duke of Burgundy to prevent a marriage between the Duke's daughter, the princess Mary, and the Dauphin, which would have united all the estates of the House of Burgundy to the Crown. In succumbing to such passions, monarchs can also be led to the fatal step of playing with religions, a step which brings with it terrible consequences:

---

83 FAREL, note C.

84 AUTRICHE, note F.

85 LOUIS XI, note R.

"C'est ainsi que de tout tems les Souverains se sont jouiez de la Religion: ils jouent à ce jeu-là encore aujourd'hui, ils persécutent chez eux ce qu'ils font triompher en d'autres païs autant qu'il leur est possible. N'allez pas dire sous ce prétexte qu'ils n'ont point de Religion. Cela n'est pas vrai: ils en ont souvent jusqu'à la bigoterie: qu'est-ce donc? ils ont encore plus à coeur le bien temporel de leur Etat, que le Regne de Jesus-Christ. Je n'en excepte point le Pape & je pense qu'il ne fut guere plus content que François I des progrès le l'Empereur contre la Ligue des Protestans."<sup>86</sup>

Throughout, Bayle's message is clear and explicit: whatever reason it is that prompts princes to persecute religions, - simplicity of soul, whim, passion, - they can and should resist such impulses.

Even where such matters as wars and revolutions are concerned, human passions are once again the prime source of motivation. In the article DRUSUS, Marc Livius, we are told:

"L'émulation de ces deux Romains [Drusus et Cépion], qui causa tant de desordres, & qui pensa perdre la République, étoit venue d'une bagatelle ... . Et voilà qui confirme ce bien des gens remarquent, que les grandes Révolutions d'Etat n'ont la plupart de tems pour principe qu'une fantaisie, ou qu'un sot caprice de quelques particuliers."<sup>87</sup>

and in MUCIE: "Voilà presque toujours la chaîne des plus grandes Révolutions. Faites-en l'analyse, vous les réduirez à un adultere."<sup>88</sup> Even Erasmus, Bayle informs us, perceived that wars most commonly stemmed from the wickedness and folly of some particular person.<sup>89</sup>

It was also Bayle's belief that if we look closely there is a clear chain of causation to be seen in the numerous revolutions

---

86 FRANCOIS I<sup>er</sup>, note P.

87 DRUSUS, Marc Livius, note D.

88 MUCIE, note D.

89 ERASME, note U.

of history. In the first instance, reports, which are sometimes contrived but on other occasions true and in the public interest, are circulated from street to street, from town to town.<sup>90</sup> These reports create great speculation until at last they fall into the hands of what Bayle calls "des gens graves", that is tribunes, demagogues or great lords: "Car voilà les principes, & les ressorts des Révolutions."<sup>91</sup> Once again it is the 'great' men who are singled out in causation. The common mass of people will generally remain passive without the leadership of such men: "Il ressemble aux eaux de la mer ordinairement tranquilles, pourvu que les vents ne soufflent pas."<sup>92</sup> Even when the masses do rise in rebellion of their own accord, and without the leadership of 'great men', their efforts are like a blaze of straw.<sup>93</sup>

Although Bayle emphasized the influence of 'great' men in the chain of causation, he did not forget the general and guiding hand of Providence. The causal chain of revolutions is an excellent clarification of the respective roles of man and God. 'Great' men inspire and lead revolutions in a specific sense, while God, in a general sense, can control the number of revolutions either by regulating: "... la stérilité de gens capables de

---

90 GARDIE, note C.

91 EDOUARD, note O.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

soutenir une intrigue de cette nature, ou par la vigueur supérieure de ceux qui régissent."<sup>94</sup>

The roles of God and man apart, what did Bayle have to say of chance in causation? In the following remark from the article TIMOLEON, he clarified this issue:

"Je soutiens avec tout cela que l'élévation & que la chute des Grands ne sont pas pour l'ordinaire le pur ouvrage de la prudence & de l'imprudence. Le hazard, le cas fortuit, la fortune, y ont bonne part. Des occurrences que l'on n'a ni préparées ni prévues ouvrent le chemin, y font marcher à grands pas. Un caprice, une jalousie, qu'on n'a pu prévoir, vous arrêtent tout d'un coup & vous jettent même entièrement hors des voies."<sup>95</sup>

Accident, luck, fortune, whatever name it went by, Bayle ascribed to it a definite role in causation. This was particularly so in military affairs, where generals such as Timoleon, Alexander, Caesar, Sylla and other ancients had acknowledged its effect: "Notez qu'il y a cent cas fortuits aussi impossibles à prévoir que celui-là, & aussi capables de faire échoûer les entreprises de guerre les mieux concertées."<sup>96</sup> A reversal of season, disease and other such misfortunes could foil the best laid military plans. It was incorrect to claim that fortune merely depended upon whether we can or cannot see the chain of natural causes and effects. Fortune is completely independent of either prudence or imprudence. What then is this fortune which favours some and blights other with such an apparent lack of discrimination? Bayle's answer to this

---

94 Ibid.

95 TIMOLEON, note K.

96 Ibid.

question is interesting for two reasons: in the first place it emphasizes once again his belief in only a general Providential influence in history, and secondly it reflects his anxiety concerning those who rationalize specific favours from acts of Providence.

Bayle began by answering that it was to no avail to have recourse to God as an answer to this question:

"... car en avouant qu'il est la cause générale de toute choses, on vous demandera s'il menage immédiatement, & par des actes particuliers de sa volonté, ces occurrences imprévues qui font réussir les desseins d'un homme, & échoüer les entreprises d'un autre. Si vous répondez par l'affirmative, vous aurez à dos tous les Philosophes, & en particulier les Cartésiens, qui vous soutiendront que la conduite que vous attribuez à l'être suprême ne convient pas à un Agent infini."<sup>97</sup>

The Cartesian philosophes would only answer that God ought to establish a few general laws to produce an infinity of events and not be distracted by producing every minor event by miracles.

The answer which Bayle himself offered as the only satisfactory explanation of fortune once again drew upon Malebranche's theory of 'occasional' causes, and we find Bayle stating quite emphatically:

"Quoi qu'il en soit, il n'y a point de fortune sans la direction de quelque cause intelligente, & je ne saurois assez m'étonner qu'un savant homme ait osé dire, que la Fortune n'étoit ni Dieu, ni la Nature, ni un Etendement, ni la Raison, mais un certain élanement naturel & irraisonnable."<sup>98</sup>

---

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.



It was characteristic of Bayle that he should draw upon this 'occasional' cause hypothesis to explain fortune, for it afforded him the opportunity once again of emphasizing the inscrutability of the ways of God. The idea of there being intelligences behind such 'occasional' causes (the gospel tells us that they are the good and evil angels)<sup>99</sup> in no way contradicts the immutability of God's general laws. We find a clarification of this hypothesis in the article PLOTIN, where Bayle remarked:

"... il me semble que tôt ou tard on sera contraint d'abandonner les principes mécaniques, si on ne leur associe les volontez de quelques Intelligences; & franchement il n'y a point d'Hypothese plus capable de donner raison des événemens, que celle qui admet une telle association. Je parle sur tout des événemens qu'on appelle casuels, fortune, bonheur, malheur; toutes choses qui ont sans doute leurs causes réglées & déterminées, par les Loix générales que nous connoissons pas, mais qui assez vraisemblablement ne sont que des causes occasionelles, semblables à celles qui font agir notre ame sur notre corps."<sup>100</sup>

In the article RORARIUS, Bayle affirmed his conviction that the hypothesis of 'occasional' causes does not in any way involve God acting miraculously.<sup>101</sup> Unless God acts contrary to His general laws, nothing that He does can be termed a miracle, and since 'occasional' causes do not contradict general laws, they cannot be termed miraculous.

Ultimately then, Bayle's view of causation was designed to establish the essential validity of his defence of toleration.

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> PLOTIN, note G.

<sup>101</sup> Rorarius, note L.

He drew upon the historical traditions of the seventeenth century as well as the principles of his own religion to form the basis of this view which in summary might be stated as follows: man, through the use of his free-will, his passions and his 'temperament' has been responsible for much of the religious and civil strife in history; Providence on the other hand, can only be said to influence history in the most general way, and should not be used as an excuse for rationalizing a justification of persecution. In the following two chapters, we shall pass on to an examination of Bayle's discussion of absolute truth and the influence this had on his historical methods.

CHAPTER IV

TOLERATION, RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY AND THE SECULARIZATION  
OF HISTORY

One of the principal restraints which was placed upon the development of a completely secular approach to history in the seventeenth century was the homage which historians were obliged to pay to the "sacredness" of sacred history. The Bible, which was an inviolable document containing the revealed word of God and which provided the basic source for ecclesiastical history, was placed beyond the scope of historical criticism, and the sacrosanct nature of this document inevitably placed historians in bondage to theology.

The final solution to the problem did not emerge until the publication of Bayle's Dictionnaire. It was in this work that he was able, for the first time, to effectively separate the whole sphere of historical scholarship from the inhibiting influence of sacred theology. Unlike Bodin and Lenain de Tillemont before him, Bayle did not set out with the specific intention of drawing this distinction. His solution to the problem comes almost as a corollary to his discussion of an issue concerned him much more

deeply: the Contest of Orthodoxy. It was his passionate condemnation of religious controversy which finally enabled him to arrive at the first clearly secular definition of history.

The time at which Bayle wrote the Dictionnaire was the climax to an age of impassioned and excessive religious controversy. The dispute about orthodoxy and the debate over "the way of examination and the way of authority" threatened the stability and religious peace of Europe, and seemed about to plunge the Continent, and France especially, into another phase of religious turmoil on the scale of the religious wars of the sixteenth century. During the seventeenth century the Catholic Counter-Reformation became more intransigent, and the French Catholics, from the sanctuary of infallible Church authority, cited Christ's invitation "contrains-d'entrer" as a sanction for the physical persecution of heretics. In reply the zealous Huguenots in exile, led by Pierre Jurieu, turned to scriptural authority to sanction a Protestant crusade against Louis XIV and the Catholic Church.

Faced with this situation, Bayle hoped to provide an invincible argument for toleration by demonstrating the obscurity of religious controversies in general, and the contest of orthodoxy in particular. In doing so he ran the gauntlet between both factions. He summarized his dilemma in the following passage:

"Sort déplorable de l'homme, vanité manifeste de la raison philosophique. Elle nous fait regarder la tranquillité de l'ame, & le calme des passions comme le but de tous nos travaux, & le fruit le plus précieux de nos plus pénibles méditations: & cependant l'expérience fait voir, que selon le monde il n'est point de condition plus disgraciée que celle des amis qui ne veulent point s'abandonner aux flots des factions, ni de condition moins incommode que celle des hommes qui hurlent avec les loups, & qui suivent le torrent des passions les plus agitées. Ils ont entre autres avantages celui de ne pas conoître qu'ils ont tort; car il n'y a point de gens plus incapables de conoître les défauts de leur faction, & le bien qui se peut trouver dans l'autre Parti, que ceux qui sont transportez d'un zèle ardent & d'une vive colere, & sous les liens d'une forte préoccupation. 'Beati pacifici', dit l'Ecriture, bienheureux les pacifiques. Cela est très-vrai quant à l'autre monde; mais dans celui-ci ils sont misérables: ils ne veulent point être marteau, & cela<sup>1</sup> fait que continuellement ils sont enclume à droite & à gauche."

The contest of orthodoxy had its origins in Luther's initial break with the established dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, centred in the interpretation of doctrine, particularly the interpretation of the revealed dogma of Scripture. The Catholics supported the method of authority, which sanctioned the orthodoxy of the Roman Church and made it the infallible interpreter of biblical revelation. The Protestants supported the orthodoxy of their position by insisting that scriptural interpretation should be undertaken by individual examination on the basis of conscience. Both churches denied each other's criterion as a means of establishing absolute religious certitude by demonstrating on rational grounds that it would eventually

---

1 EPPENDORF, note C.

lead to complete religious scepticism. This was the point which Bayle seized upon to expose the obscurity of danger of religious controversy as a prelude to proposing complete liberty of conscience for the individual.

"[La Dispute] est un instrument dont on peut tirer de bons usages contre le mensonge: mais il n'en demeure point-là; car après avoir détruit l'erreur, il attaque la vérité: il ressemble à ces poudres corrosives, qui après avoir mangé les chairs baveuses d'une plaie rongeroient aussi la chair vive, & carieroient les os, si on les laissoit faire."<sup>2</sup>

Bayle took the theses upon which both churches rested their claims to orthodoxy, tested them, and rejected their validity. He did not, however, reject the doctrines which were embodied in scriptural revelation: he rejected only the criteria which were normally applied to prove the absolute certainty of these doctrines.

The contest of orthodoxy in seventeenth century France was revived in 1671 when the Jansenist, Pierre Nicole, published his Préjuges légitimes contre le calvinisme, a defence of the authority of the Catholic Church against the Calvinist position of individual examination. He was answered in 1673 by Jean Claude in La défense de la réformation. Then, in 1678, the contest momentarily left the arena of pamphlet war for the more sedate setting of the salon. In that year Claude came face to face with the formidable Gallican theologian Bossuet to engage in a debate for the soul of Mme de Duras, niece of Marshall Turenne. In the debate, which took place

---

2 EUCLIDE, note E.

in a rather theatrical setting, the Catholic way of authority wrestled with the Calvinist way of examination.

As might have been expected, Bossuet began by advancing a reasoned proof for the infallibility of his church and defined the nature of its authority. In his turn, Claude defended the Calvinist belief in individual examination of the Bible, submitting his own rational proofs for this belief. And the result? Deadlock! The only tangible achievement was the conversion of Mme de Duras to Catholicism, and this seems to have been a foregone conclusion before the debate commenced. Nothing was resolved between Bossuet and Claude. All the reason and logic at their command could not convince their opponent, but the debate did confirm Bayle's opinion about two things: that truth is beyond attainment when reason is blinded by prejudice, and, more importantly, that reason is totally inadequate as a means of resolving disputes about religion.

In the years after the debate, the Catholic Counter-Reformation in France was strengthened, and the Huguenots were faced with mounting persecution. The climax came on Sunday, October 21st, 1685 when Bossuet mounted the pulpit to preach his sermon "contrains-d'entrer" to Louis XIV and his entire court. Then, four days after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes,<sup>3</sup> and in the royal presence,

---

3 The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was declared on October 17th. 1685, but it was not confirmed by the Parlement until October 22nd.

Bossuet demanded that Catholics should use force against the Protestants. Momentarily the Huguenots were routed. Those who could do so fled to the relative safety of Holland, "la grande arche des fugutifs".<sup>4</sup>

But the contest had not ended. Even before Bossuet's sermon, Claude's and Nicole's books had been republished in Holland, in 1682 and 1683 respectively. These new editions brought the debate into the open once more, and in 1684 Nicole continued his case in Les prétendus réformés convaincus de schisme. From their sanctuary in Holland, the Huguenots of the Refuge flung themselves back into the contest with renewed vigour. Jurieu took up Nicole's challenge in his Le vrai système de l'Eglise of 1686 and, in the same year, Paul Pellisson, a former Huguenot who had adjured his religion for Catholicism, came to Nicole's support with his two volume work Réflexions sur les différends en matière de religion etc. .... In 1687 Nicole replied to Jurieu with his De l'unité de l'Eglise and in both 1687 and 1689 Pellisson expanded and republished his book, the latest edition bearing the title Les chimères de M. Jurieu etc. .... So fierce was the contest, that it even divided the Protestant camp. After his dispute with Bayle over toleration, Jurieu became involved in a further controversy over examination with the pastor from Utrecht, Elie Saurin.

---

4 KUCHLIN, Jean, in corp.



The historical reasons for the prominence which Bayle gave to the contest of orthodoxy in the Dictionnaire are obvious enough, but there were personal reasons as well. As a young man he had undergone a religious crisis involving the very issues being debated in the contest. While a twenty-one year old student of philosophy at Puylaurens, his faith in Calvinism had been shaken by a Catholic pamphlet which showed that the Reformed Church had no authoritative body on earth to establish dogma. He discarded Reform for the traditional church, but eighteen months later he returned to his original faith, unable to accept the authority of the Roman Church on the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Then in November 1685 his brother Jacob died, a victim of Catholic persecution in France. This was an event for which Bayle felt a deep sense of personal responsibility. Bossuet's sermon, which followed so quickly upon his brother's arrest must have struck deeply at Bayle's sensitivity over religious intolerance, and the bitter invective of Jurieu's initial Lettres pastorales and his Le vrai système de l'Eglise published during the first two months of 1686, would have done nothing to calm him. Not surprisingly then, almost a year to the day after Bossuet's sermon, Bayle published the first two parts of the Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de J.C. contrains-les d'entrer, a forthright defence of the rights of individual conscience and an appeal for religious toleration. Four years later, the appearance of the Avis important aux refugiez prompted Jurieu to accuse Bayle of its authorship. He engaged him for more than three years in a bitter debate over religious toleration, and it was the

enmity aroused by this dispute that prompted Jurieu to secure Bayle's dismissal from his post at the Ecole Illustre, Amsterdam, in October, 1693. In the midst of this crisis the Dutch publishers Reiniers Leers issued the Projet et fragmens d'un Dictionnaire critique in May, 1692, so it is not unreasonable to expect that Bayle should have wished to revive in this new work the spirit of the Commentaire philosophique by seizing the opportunity to re-assert his defence of toleration and condemn the intransigence of religious apologists.

The first lesson which Bayle drew from the religious controversies he had seen and experienced was that when apologists had exhausted the powers of reason they "... ne souffroient plus la contradiction, ils vouloient que l'on se soumit à leurs éclaircissemens ...", and must resort to persuasion by physical force. The controversy between Cain and Abel, for example, was essentially a religious one since Cain denied the goodness of God in the belief that he had been forsaken by Providence. "'... attendu," dit-il à son Frere, que mon oblation n'a pas été acceptée, & que la vôtre l'a été.'" In reply, Abel merely substituted the affirmative for the negative. "La dispute s'étant échauffée, Caïn se jetta sur Abel & le tua. Ce fut un mauvais commencement des Disputes de Religion, & un facheux présage des desordres épouvantables qu'elles devoient causer dans le Monde."<sup>6</sup> Cain illustrated the fact that men are

---

5 RUFIN, note C.

6 ABEL, note E.

so conceited as to believe that they occupy too considerable a rank in the universal scheme to be overlooked by an equitable and judicious dispenser of good and evil. The same conceit was the inspiration of religious persecutors. "Malheureux intolérans! il faut bien que votre maladie soit bizarre, puis que la peine du talion ne la guérit pas."<sup>7</sup> As a remedy for this "disease", Bayle proposed his most forceful argument in defence of toleration. His intention was "... to persuade his readers that dogmas are not matters of incontrovertible certainty. If he can succeed in this endeavour, he may be able to reduce somewhat the intolerant dogmatism of religious controversy."<sup>8</sup>

His method was the one adopted in the Commentaire philosophique:<sup>9</sup> to prove that neither authority nor examination provide satisfactory criteria for the establishment of absolute religious certitude. They both introduce techniques of philosophical enquiry into religious questions, and for this reason they inevitably lead to complete religious scepticism. Ultimately, faith and reason are the only criteria for absolute truth. Although reason can establish both clarity and certitude, it can do so only in philosophical matters. Faith, on the other hand, is the only criterion which can produce religious certitude but it cannot produce clarity. It is in the last resort, a divine gift from God. "Il semble", wrote Bayle, "que Dieu

---

7 NAVARRE, Marguerite de, fille d'Henri II, note G.

8 Brush, Montaigne and Bayle, p.165.

9 See Labrousse, Pierre Bayle, II passim; Brush, Montaigne and Bayle, Chap. X; Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, pt. II, Chaps. 3, 4 and 5.

qui en est le distributeur agisse en pere commun de toutes les Sectes, c'est-à-dire qu'il ne veuille point souffrir qu'une Secte puisse pleinement triompher des autres, & les abîmer sans ressource."<sup>10</sup>

In other words, God revealed His truths not to a particular church, but to the individual conscience of every man. Therefore to force a man to act against the dictates of his conscience is to oblige him to sin against the will of God, to act the part of a hypocrite.

"Monstre de doctrine, qui renverse toute la Morale, & en comparaison duquel le Probabilism le plus outré est un sentiment innocent."<sup>11</sup> If a man who opposes the dictates of his conscience is a sinner in God's eyes, then a man who forces the conscience of another must also be a sinner. In view of the religious persecution which accompanied the contrast of orthodoxy it is little wonder that Bayle should have remarked that it would have benefitted both churches not to have stirred that question.<sup>12</sup> But stir it they did.

Since the contest of orthodoxy had brought into question the doctrine of infallible Church authority which Pierre Nicole had originally sought to defend in 1671, Bayle set out to systematically and thoroughly discredit it, although he admitted "On pourroit peut-être dire du premier Ouvrage qui a paru sur ces matieres, ce que les Anciens disoient du premier navir, Plût à dieu que l'arbre qui servit à construire fût encore debout!"<sup>13</sup> Bayle was emphatic that

---

10 RORARIUS, note G.

11 AILLI, note L.

12 PELLISSON, note D.

13 NICOLLE, note C.

neither Nicole, nor Pellisson who followed him, was able to refute conclusively the Protestant challenge that the way of authority was the high road to scepticism. After all, he argued, even if it were possible to establish the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, how does one decide where this authority resides? To the usual reply that this authority derives from the infallibility of tradition, the Pope and the Councils, Bayle objected that "On ne peut point soutenir l'infaillibilité de l'Eglise à l'égard des faits; & à moins que de l'admettre, on s'expose à mille inconvénients."<sup>14</sup> Tradition is, for example, at very best a doubtful mark of infallibility. Even the Catholic theologians disagree on certain traditions, especially those concerning the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.<sup>15</sup> They agree no better on the relative authority of the Pope and his Councils. The Pope's authority was "... inférieure aux Conciles selon quelques-uns, supérieure selon quelques autres."<sup>16</sup> Moreover,

---

14 ARNAULD, Antoine, fils d'Antoine Arnauld l'Avocat, note 0.

15 Reference to the differences of opinion between the Thomists and the Scotists over the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary comes from Bayle's earlier works: see Brush, Montaigne and Bayle, p.223. In the Dictionnaire Bayle made a general reference to these disputes in EUCLIDE, note C and the "Eclaircissement sur les pyrrhoniens", Dictionnaire, IV, p.633.

16 NICOLLE, note C.

how is each new successor to Saint Peter's title to be distinguished? Not by Councils if they are inferior to Popes. If the Pope is infallible, then only the Pope can be certain of his right to the office, since he is confirmed in it by no other authority than God. For every difficulty raised about authority, the answer seemed to Bayle to be what is called "Petitio principii".<sup>17</sup>

Even if these difficulties could be answered and the infallibility of the Church could be proven, how is a heretic to be persuaded that the Roman Church is the infallible one? "On ne peut conoître où réside l'Autorité, qu'en examinant quelles sont les marques de l'Eglise qui la possède."<sup>18</sup> Consequently Catholics are faced with the very criterion which they deny to Protestants: the way of examination. "Il faut savoir si ceux qui en comptent cent sont plus raisonnables que ceux qui en comptent quinze, ou douze, ou dix, ou six, ou seulement quatre. Quand on aura fixé le nombre des marques, il faudra examiner si elles conviennent à l'Eglise Romaine, plutôt qu'à Eglise Greque."<sup>19</sup> Difficulty upon difficulty! How is the heretic to determine either the number or the nature of these marks? To accept the authority of the Church on the matter is simply begging the question again. Neither Nicole nor Pellisson were able to resolve these difficulties. Nicole was especially careful to

---

17 i.e. "Begging the question". In MALDONAT, S.J., note L Bayle called "Petitio principii" a sophism, "... défaut enormé, & qui doit être banni d'une Controverse, comme un obstacle essentiel au dessein qu'on a d'eclaircir une vérité."

18 PELLISSON, note D.

19 Ibid.

avoid contesting the marks of the Church's authority with Jurieu, but one Catholic apologist was not so cautious. In the early seventeenth century, Cardinal Bellarmine expounded his own proofs for the divinity of the Roman Church and Bayle took up the challenge, finding an opportunity somewhere in the Dictionnaire to discredit every single one.

Bellarmino's proofs for the divinity of the Catholic Church are listed in MAHOMET II, note D: "... le nom de Catholique; l'Antiquité; une longue durée non interrompue; l'étendue; la succession des Evêques; les miracles; l'austérité des mœurs; le témoignage des Adversaires; & telles autres marques ... ."20 He was even so imprudent as to put: "... la prospérité entre les marques de la vraie Eglise."21 If these were the marks of the true church, and the Roman Church could claim that title, then none of them should have been discernible in any other church. But, Bayle argued, these are the same marks "... que les Sectateurs de Mahomet allèguent à l'avantage de leur Religion."22 How then can Catholics be so conceited as to advance them as proofs for the authority and orthodoxy of their church?

In the article LAUNOI, for example, Bayle asserted that the argument of antiquity and a long uninterrupted duration was as true for the Mahometan religion as it was for the Christian. There was little value to be gained by Catholics maintaining that sooner or later false religions would be destroyed by the wrath of God and inferring the divinity of their own religion from its long duration. Exactly what duration is

---

20 MAHOMET II, note E.

21 MAHOMET, note P.

22 MAHOMET II, note E.

necessary to distinguish truth from error? One hundred, five hundred, a thousand years?

"Si mille ans suffisent, toute opinion qui a dix siecles sur la tête est véritable; mais si vous ne vous fixez à aucun terme, c'est en vain que vous concluez que puis qu'un dogme a duré quatre mille ans, il doit passer pour certain: vous ignorez l'avenir; vous ne savez pas si le cinquieme millenaire viendra à bout de ce qui a résisté aux précédens."<sup>23</sup>

Equally unsatisfactory was the argument of extent originally adopted by the early patriarchs to show that Christianity had fulfilled scriptural prophecies. The Old Testament prophesied that "... la connoissance & le service du vrai Dieu sous le Messie ne seroient point renfermez comme auparavant dans un petit coin de la Palestine, mais qu'alors toutes les Nations seroient le Peuple de Dieu."<sup>24</sup> In the light of the remarkable and universal spread of Christianity, the argument of extent appeared initially to be a very cogent argument, particularly against the Jews whose own religion remained constricted. By the seventeenth century, however, Bayle was able to assert that the Islamic faith was of considerably greater extent than the Christian, "car elle la surpasse de la 30 partie du Monde connu",<sup>25</sup> and since the time of Mahomet, Catholics ought to have forsaken extent as a mark of the true church "... puis qu'à ne considérer que l'étendue, la Religion de ce faux Prophète se pouvoit attribuer les anciens Oracles, tout de même que le Christianisme se les étoit attribuez."<sup>26</sup>

---

23 LAUNOI, Jean de, note Q.

24 MAHOMET, note P.

25 MAHOMET, note A.

26 MAHOMET, note P.



Bellarmino, moreover, actually went so far as to place prosperity among the marks of the true church. Christ's promise: "de maintenir son Eglise contre les portes de l'Enfer",<sup>27</sup> was deemed to be a sanction for the temporal successes of the church. This was reasonable, Bayle replied, while Christianity was "benigne, douce, patiente, qui recommandoit aux sujets de soumettre à leurs Souverains, & n'aspiroit pas à s'élever sur les trônes par la voie des rebellions ...".<sup>28</sup> One must admire the prosperity of a church in which "L'Evangile prêché par des gens sans nom, sans étude, sans éloquence, cruellement persécutés & destitués de tous les apuis humains, ne laissa pas de s'établir en peu de tems par toute la terre."<sup>29</sup> But in Bayle's time Christianity had become "... une Religion sanguinaire, meurtrière, accoutumée au carnage depuis cinq ou six-cens ans."<sup>30</sup> Christians, furthermore:

"... avoit contracté une très-longue habitude de se maintenir & de s'agrandir, en faissant passer au fil de l'épée tout ce qui lui résistoit. Les Buchers, les Bourreaux, le Tribunal effroiable de l'Inquisition, les Croisades, les Bulles qui excitoient les sujets à se rebeller, les Prédicateurs séditieux, les Conspirations, les Assassinsats des Princes étoient les moyens ordinaires qu'elle emploioit contre ceux qui ne se soumettoient pas à ses ordres."<sup>31</sup>

Apart from introducing "le grand secret de l'art militaire" into religion, is this not "... décider que pourvû que l'Orthodoxie

---

27 NESTORIUS, note E.

28 JAPON, note E.

29 MAHOMET, note O.

30 JAPON, note E.

31 Ibid.

triomphe, il n'importe par où ni comment?"<sup>32</sup>

The example of Islam served to explode this myth completely. If temporal success were to be used as a mark of the divinity of the Roman Church, how could theologians explain the overwhelming successes won by the Infidels? Bayle was emphatic, "en matiere de triomphes l'étoile du Mahometisme à prévalu sur l'étoile du Christianism ..."<sup>33</sup> Moreover "... s'il falloit juger de la bonté de ces Religions par la gloire des bons succès temporels, la Mahométane passeroit pour la meilleure."<sup>34</sup> To answer this difficulty, Catholic theologians had been obliged to wear their principles as they to their clothes, "... les uns pour l'été, & les autres pour l'hiver."<sup>35</sup> When the cause of Christianity succeeded, they pointed to its success as a mark of Providential approval. When the Infidels prospered, their excuse was that for the just punishment of man, God frequently permitted success to the wicked. "Y a-t-il rien de plus commode que cela?"<sup>36</sup> "Et de là vient que les mêmes Communions changent d'esprit & de maximes, à mesure qu'elles acquièrent ou qu'elles perdent la supériorité."<sup>37</sup>

If prosperity is not a mark of divinity, neither is adversity a mark of heresy. When Father Maimbourg maintained that the capture of Constantinople and the destruction of the Byzantine Empire were the just punishment of God on the Greek Church for refusing to submit to Rome,

---

32 CHARRON, note I.

33 MAHOMET II, note D.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 VERGERIUS, P.P. 11, note C.

he was begging the question, for, Bayle asked, what of Rome itself? Did not Charles V treat Rome as severely in 1527 as the Turks did Constantinople in 1492?<sup>38</sup> Should the Pope have submitted to the Patriarch? Did not the sack of Rome by the Goths give the pagans a right to turn this adversity against the divinity of the Christian Church?<sup>39</sup> No. The argument that adversity is a mark of heresy is an argument born of passion and false zeal for religion, and was used by Catholics against Lutherans in the same way that pagans reproached the early Christians, and indeed all Protestants might reproach Catholics.<sup>40</sup> Maimbourg would have done greater service to his cause if he had avoided such arguments.

Bellarmino, too, had done a disservice to his cause. By citing miracles as a proof for the divinity of the Roman Church, he had not only failed to prove his point, he had also encouraged the excessive multiplication of miracles in all religions. This practice, fervently pursued by the Roman Church, could rationally undermine a belief in the divinity of the Scriptures. Superstitious phenomena such as miracles, prophecies and holy relics were the offspring of ignorance, just as religious prejudices were the offspring of passion and emotion, and the ignorance which gave rise to a belief in superstitions nourished naïve credulity which in turn encouraged the excessive multiplication of miracles. The danger was that "... la crédulité est la source de la multiplication, & qu'il n'y a point de meilleure pépinière que celle-là; mais, enfin, ou

---

38 MAHOMET II, note O.

39 Ibid.

40 VERGERIUS, P.P. ii, note O; see also MILLETIERE, note G.

en abuse avec tant d'excès, qu'on guérit tous ceux qui ne sont pas incurables."<sup>44</sup> In other words to carry religion to the point of superstition means "on y coule le moucheron, on y engloutit le chameau."<sup>42</sup> To people who use their reason, the excessive multiplication of superstitious phenomena will soon replace naïve credulity with total disbelief. The greater part of mankind will then believe in no miracles at all. Although he did not explicitly draw the conclusion, it is obvious that Bayle was inferring that a total disbelief in miracles would include a disbelief in the miracles of the Gospel, an opinion held by the Spinozists, and this would subvert the very basis of Christian teaching.

How, in any event, are miracles to be verified? We cannot accept the authority of the Church on the matter, since miracles are supposed to be a mark of that authority. Reason cannot identify them, since by their very nature they are a contradiction of rational phenomena. Bayle's answer to this question, in note B of JONAS, was that a belief in miracles, with the exception of biblical miracles which must be accepted on faith, depended in general on passions, religious prejudice and ignorance. The pagans, for example, had fed the superstitious minds of their people for centuries with a host of miraculous prodigies, but when Christian miracles were presented to them, they ridiculed the credulity of Christians and the impossibility of their miracles. Christians

---

41 ACHILLEA, note H.

42 ALTING, Henri, note G.

themselves behaved no better. If the Greek Church proposed miracles to show that the schism of Nestorius offended God, the Nestorians denied them; but a miracle which attested to the injustice of the Greek Church was applauded by the Nestorians.<sup>43</sup> Pagan or Christian, Greek or Roman Catholic, Calvinist or Lutheran, every religion either affirmed or denied miracles according to the interests of its cause.

Even austerity of manners or morality was an unsatisfactory proof for the divinity of the Roman Church. It was dangerous for the Christians to try the divinity of their church on the grounds of morality, for in a contest with the Infidels they would gain little advantage. Only on the foundation of wit, learning and military prowess would Christians have the advantage. But "Bel avantage que d'entendre beaucoup mieux qu'eux l'art de tuer, de bombarder, & d'exterminer le genre humain!"<sup>44</sup> Although Bayle admitted that Christians were neither more nor less moral than the Infidels,<sup>45</sup> he did nothing to dispel the suggestion that Christians had strayed from the path of righteousness. He could even assert that atheists were neither more nor less moral than Christians.<sup>46</sup> In other words, morality does not depend upon religion. Not even the strict moral code advocated by Calvin could be cited as testimony for the divinity of his church.

---

43 JONAS, le prophète, note B.

44 MAHOMET, note P.

45 Ibid.

46 SPINOZA, note I; "Eclaircissement sur les athées", Dictionnaire, IV, passim.

Bayle's attack on the traditional marks of authority in the Roman Catholic Church was thorough. He suggested finally that "... la voie de l'Autorité conduit nécessairement les particuliers à être Mahométans en Turquie, Païens dans la Chine, & toujours de la Religion Nationale."<sup>47</sup> A significant fact for the contest of orthodoxy, moreover, was that the way of authority "... demande un long travail, & une suite pénible de discussions: desorte qu'ayant voulu éviter la voie de l'Examen, on s'y retrouve néanmoins nécessairement."<sup>48</sup> Furthermore "... la voie de l'Autorité, par où les Catholiques Romaines sont profession de se conduire, est le grand chemin du Pyrrhonisme."<sup>49</sup> Essentially this was a traditionally Calvinist stand against the authority of the Catholic Church, but it remains to be seen whether Bayle considered the way of examination as any more sure a path to religious certitude and orthodoxy.

A fact which only becomes clear in the light of his defence of toleration in the Dictionnaire is that Bayle discussed the way of examination according to three different levels of meaning. First he remarked on the way of examination which was based upon prepossessions rather than natural reason, a method which he considered was practised by both the parties to the contest of orthodoxy. It resolved nothing because the disputants commenced with the prepossession that they were right and because of their passions and prejudices they could not be persuaded otherwise. Secondly, he remarked upon what we might call Cartesian or

---

47 PUCCIUS, note B.

48 PELLISSON, note D.

49 NICOLLE, note C.

philosophical examination, a full examination conducted by natural reason as opposed to partial examination based upon prepossessions. He dismissed this also because ultimately it destroyed the basis of Christianity and led to absolute religious scepticism. Thirdly, he remarked upon the orthodox Calvinist doctrine of examination of the Bible based upon conscience. This was the way of examination by which men, relying on moral demonstration and grace, could inquire into the Bible to discover (but not to understand) the certitude of God's revealed word. It was this final method of examination which he personally accepted. Each of these three levels of meaning was an indispensable part of his defence of toleration, for they exposed the ability of prejudice to obscure truth in religious disputes, and established the primacy of faith over reason as the criterion for religious certitude. It was from this primacy that Bayle justified the complete liberty of the individual and erring conscience.

Bayle discussed the first of these methods of examination, that based upon prepossessions and prejudices, in note D of the article PELLISSON. His point was that because of their passions, prepossessions and religious zeal, neither of the two adversaries in a dispute was able to understand himself or his opponent, since theological problems were not examined on the basis of clear and natural reason. What they believed to be an examination of reason was actually no more than rationalization of their own passions and prejudices. Instead of reading the works of the contrary party, they learned of their adversaries' arguments from fragments included in the works of their own writers.

Nothing said by the opposite party was granted validity, and not even the judgements of a superior tribunal could alter this prejudice.

"D'où vient cela? N'est-ce pas de ce qu'ils examinent tout avec une sorte prévention d'avoir la justice de leur côté?"<sup>50</sup> Neither

Pellissons nor Nicoles, Claudes nor Jurieus, neither Catholic nor

Protestant apologists in Bayle's opinion were concerned to discover

the legitimate criterion for religious certitude. "... si vous

n'avez pas dessein de les [les Loix du combat] observer, il vaut mieux

n'entrer point en lice, & dire tout court, il faut croire cela sans

raisonner: Dieu l'a dit, cela doit suffire."<sup>51</sup> The adversaries began

with the prepossession that they were orthodox, and not even the most

incontrovertible arguments could dissuade them from this opinion. The

contest of orthodoxy, therefore, could serve little purpose other than to

inflame passions and stir the fires of persecution in both camps.

What if prepossessions could be laid aside? What if partial examination could be replaced by full examination? Could clear and unfettered reason establish complete religious certitude and resolve the question of orthodoxy? Bayle could not leave such questions unanswered without exposing a serious flaw in his defence of toleration; but to deny the validity of examination was to deny one of the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism. To resolve this difficulty, he drew the further distinction between examination through reason and examination through conscience.

---

50 PELLISSON, note D.

51 RUFIN, note C.



Bayle introduced the first principle of Cartesian or philosophical examination in note D of the article PELLISSON: "La première chose qu'il faudroit faire, si l'on vouloit bien examiner, seroit de douter de sa Religion ... ."52 For example, in attempting to prove the existence of God, one should behave as Maldonat did, and examine the two propositions "il y a un Dieu" and "il n'y a point de

---

52 PELLISSON, note D. I cannot agree with H. T. Mason that this quotation, along with another from MALDONAT, S. J., note L: "Il faudra examiner tout, comme si nous étions une table rase", sum up Bayle's dilemma of being a religious sceptic who made an outward profession of Calvinism in order to preserve what little tranquillity remained to him in exile: see Mason, Bayle's Religious Views, p.215. Bayle had already shown his preparedness to surrender his tranquillity in defence of the principles of liberty of conscience and toleration, although he did exhibit more caution in the Dictionnaire than in his earlier works. Mason makes the error of assuming that the sceptical precipice to which Bayle pushed rational examination was in fact representative of his own sceptical attitude to religion. This error becomes apparent if we read these quotations in their proper context of Bayle's attack on orthodoxy. If he was a sceptic in anything, it was in matters of philosophy where his mistrust of reason was apparent. His avowed fideism makes his religious position not like that of Melancthon, but more in accord with the sentiments expressed in this passage from SPINOZA, note M: "... il y a aussi des gens qui ont la Religion dans le coeur, & non pas dans l'esprit. Ils la perdent de vue dès qu'ils la cherchent pas les voies du raisonnement humain: ... mais dès qu'ils ne dispurent plus, & qu'ils ne font qu'écouter les preuves de sentiment, les instincts de la conscience, le poids de l'éducation, &c., il sont persuadés d'une Religion, & ils y conforment leur vie autant que l'infirmité humain le permet."

Dieu."<sup>53</sup> This is essential, Bayle explained, to ensure that all prepossessions will be set aside. If, however, this position of doubting is not to persist, it is essential to show that it is possible to recognize truth by certain characteristics, which Bayle called "Criterium veritatus".<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, it must be shown that such criteria or "l'évidence" possesses a certain character of truth, "... car si l'évidence n'étoit pas ce caractere, rien ne le seroit."<sup>55</sup> Where, in Bayle's opinion, examination is based upon reason, the only valid criterion for truth is self-evidence ("l'évidence"); that is to say, propositions which according to our reason cannot possibly be otherwise than true. Self-evidence, however, belongs properly to philosophy, and to introduce it into religion will lead directly to scepticism, for the dogmas of the Christian religion are clear contradictions of certain self-evident propositions of philosophy.

To illustrate this point, Bayle invented a dialogue between two Catholic priests, the abbé "philosophe" and the abbé "theologien".<sup>56</sup> The abbé "philosophe" began by citing four dogmas of the Church which contradicted four self-evident principles of philosophy. (These examples, it should be mentioned, formed the core of the dispute between the Catholics and the Protestants in the contents of orthodoxy). The abbé's first self-evident principle was

---

53 MALDONAT, S. J., note L.

54 PYRRHON, note B.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

"les choses qui ne sont pas différentes d'une troisième, ne différent point entre elles ...", which explicitly contradicted the revealed mystery of the Trinity. The second was "que pour faire un homme qui soit réellement & parfaitement une personne, il suffit d'unir ensemble un corps humain & une âme raisonnable", which denied the mystery of the Incarnation. The third principle "qu'un corps humain ne peut pas être en plusieurs lieux tout à la fois, & que sa tête ne peut pas être pénétrée avec toutes ses autres parties sous un point indivisible. ...", contradicted the mystery of the Eucharist. Finally the principle "que les modes d'une substance ne peuvent point subsister sans la substance qu'elles modifient. ...", denied the mystery of Transubstantiation. Since reason tells us that the four philosophical principles are irrefutably true, we can only assume one of two possibilities about the mysteries of religion which they contradict: they are false, or that reason itself is an unsatisfactory criterion upon which to base religious certitude.

If Bayle's intention had been to subvert the principles of Christian theology, or if his faith in reason had been surer, he would undoubtedly have chosen the first possibility. Instead, he concluded his comments on this footnote with this remark: "C'est donc une heureuse disposition à la Foi, que de connaître les défauts de la Raison ... ." <sup>57</sup> His point had been made in terms of the

---

57 PYRRHON, note C.

contest of orthodoxy: since reason was an unsatisfactory criterion in disputes about religion, the contest or orthodoxy could produce little more than the dogmatism of religious prejudice or complete religious scepticism. Some other criterion was needed for religious disputes: "Si un homme s'est convaincu qu'il n'a rien de bon à se promettre de ses Discussions Philosophiques, il se sentira plus disposé à prier Dieu, pour lui demander la persuasion des vérités qu'il faut croire, que s'il se flatte d'un bon succès en raisonnant, & en disputant."<sup>58</sup> To confirm that in discrediting reason as the criterion for arriving at religious certitude, Bayle's intention was to put an end to the contest of orthodoxy, we need only to cite this passage from the article NICOLLE:

"Mais comme les choses ont deux faces, il y a quelque sujet d'espérer que les esprits bien tournés profiteront d'une Controverse si fâcheuse. Ils apprendront à renfermer dans ses bornes la Maxime de Mr. Des Cartes, touchant la suspension de nos jugemens. Ils apprendront à se défier des lumières naturelles, & à recourir à la conduite de l'Esprit de Dieu, puis que notre Raison est si imparfaite. Ils apprendront combien il est nécessaire de s'attacher à la doctrine de la grâce, & combien notre humilité plaît à Dieu, puis qu'il a voulu nous mortifier jusques dans la possession de ses vérités; n'ayant pas permis que nous les discernassions par les voies d'un Examen philosophique, par lesquelles nous parvenons à la science de certaines choses."<sup>59</sup>

The criterion which Bayle selected for religious certitude under his third definition of examination was faith: "... il falloit avant toutes choses leur [les Pyrrhoniens] faire sentir l'infirmité de la Raison, afin que ce sentiment les porte à recourir à un meilleur guide qui est la Foi."<sup>60</sup> This assertion, which is echoed throughout the

---

58 Ibid.

59 NICOLLE, note C.

60 PYRRHON, note B.

Dictionnaire, has provided grounds for the opinion that Bayle was a complete, or at least a semi-fideist, an opinion which we have already remarked upon.<sup>61</sup> But how did Bayle define faith? His definition, like Calvin's,<sup>62</sup> was something short of clear: "Or cette Foi qu'il exigeoit ne s'acqueroit point par une suite de discussions Philosophiques, & par de grans raisonnemens: c'étoit un don de Dieu, c'étoit une pure grace du saint Esprit, & qui ne tomboit pour l'ordinaire que sur des personnes ignorantes."<sup>63</sup> It was a gift which produces certainty but not clarity: "cette Foi produit une certitude achevée, mais son objet demeure toujours inévident: la Science au contraire produit tout ensemble l'évidence de l'objet, & la pleine certitude de la persuasion."<sup>64</sup>

The form of examination which Bayle accepted, and which was designed to complement rather than contradict faith, was based upon rational evidence but lacked the certitude of philosophical proof. It was an examination which produced moral demonstration based upon the doctrine of probability. It was not treated cohesively as a subject in the Dictionnaire, but Bayle discussed it sufficiently for us to glean

---

61 See Chapter III, pp.57-61, 81-88.

62 See Wendel, Calvin, pp.253-63.

63 "Eclaircissement sur les Manichéens", Dictionnaire, IV, p.621.  
In SPINOZA, note M, Bayle defined Christian belief as preferring "déférer aux preuves de sentiment, & aux impressions de la conscience, en un mot à la Parole de Dieu ... ."

64 "Eclaircissement sur les Manichéens", Dictionnaire, IV, p.621.

his meaning. He argued that while faith alone could establish the certitude of the revealed mysteries in the Bible, and that comprehension of them was impossible, there was an area in which rational examination of the Scriptures was valid:

"C'est un avantage que de pouvoir concilier les principes des Philosophes, c'est un bien qu'on ne doit point négliger, & que l'on doit faire profiter autant que l'on peut; mais il faut être toujours très-résigné à la perdre sans regret, lors qu'on ne peut pas l'étendre jusqu'aux doctrines, où il ne sauroit atteindre, & qui par l'essence du mystere sont au-dessus de la portée de notre Raison."<sup>65</sup>

Although comprehension and certainty of revealed mysteries were beyond reason, it was at least possible to morally demonstrate the divinity of the Holy Scriptures, and to clarify obscurities and inconsistencies in the text of the Bible by rational examination.

The substance of this argument was discussed in the article BEAULIEU, where Bayle was remarking upon a dispute between Saurin and Jurieu over the principle of faith. In the final analysis, both of these minister, according to Bayle, agreed in principle that the divine inspiration of the Scriptures was beyond absolute, geometrical certainty and could only be proved by moral demonstration, although when the dispute commenced Jurieu was somewhat less than clear as to what moral demonstration was. Bayle clarified the situation by remarking that "Une démonstration morale ne consiste pas comme les démonstrations géométriques dans un point indivisible: elle souffre le plus & le moins, & se promene depuis une grande probabilité, jusques à une très-grande probabilité."<sup>66</sup> In other words, the divinity of the Bible

---

65 PERROT, Nicholas, note L.

66 BEAULIEU, note F.

rests upon the most satisfactory proofs available: the fact that it is more probable, according to our reason, that God did inspire the Scripture than that He did not. This degree of probability should be sufficient to convince many rational men who do not possess the divine gift of faith. However, Bayle cautioned, if a man should refuse to accept any other criteria than the proof of self-evident principles, he should not be persecuted. Reason justified his stand, which, without faith, is entirely logical unless it can be proven to him that the mysteries of the Bible are self-evident. Since this is impossible "Tout ce donc que la raison & la charité exigent de vous, c'est de prier Dieu pour lui, & de faire en sorte par les voies d'une instruction modérée, qu'il trouve moins de probabilité dans ses opinions que dans les vôtres."<sup>67</sup>

When he denied that reason could establish religious certitude either through authority or Cartesian examination, Bayle showed that there is no dogma in any church which is a matter of incontrovertible certainty. On the contrary, the only satisfactory criterion for religious certitude is faith, and since faith is a gift from God, only God can infallibly know who possesses it. Furthermore, since faith can produce only the certainty, but not the understanding of revealed mysteries, there is no way of proving that what any man believes is not

---

67 NICOLLE, note C. In VORSTIUS, Conrad, note N, Bayle commented "Il n'y a rien qui indispose davantage contre l'Orthodoxie, que d'en être persécuté."

in fact revealed dogma. They only sure guide in religious matters is conscience. Because it can be shown that no church is infallibly in possession of revealed dogma, it must be a sin for a church to force an heretical conscience, since none but God can know whether the beliefs upheld by this conscience have not in fact been revealed though the gift of grace. We must even tolerate the conscience of a man like Grotius who believed in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but refused to accept the communion of any one church on the grounds that it is a sign that one damns other Christian sects,<sup>68</sup> for "... tous les sermens par où l'on s'engage à l'Eglise sont conditionels; mais l'engagement aux lumieres de la conscience est naturel, essential, & absolu."<sup>69</sup>

Bayle applied the principle not only to believing Christians but to non-believers as well. Since no church can prove its orthodoxy, it can have only voluntary subjects whose oaths of allegiance respect the dictates of their conscience. If the erroneous conscience of a Jew or a pagan is not illuminated by the light of grace, no church has the right to force an oath of allegiance from him if it contradicts the light of his conscience. None but God has the right to judge a man's conscience since only He can be sure when grace has been received.

---

68 GROTIUS, Hugo, note L.

69 GREGOIRE I<sup>er</sup>, note E. In ALTING, Henri, note E. Bayle commented: "Si l'on avoit à se haïr & à se persécuter pour la Religion, on devroit attendre que l'on fût comme les peuples d'Egypte, les uns au service d'un Dieu, & les autres au service d'un tout autre Dieu."



To force the conscience of a heretic, therefore, is to force him to sin against the will of God, whether the heretic be pagan, Jew or atheist, for "c'est ... que ceux que l'on convertit de cette sorte retournent à leur vomissement quand ils le peuvent."<sup>70</sup> The conscience of an atheist is just as inviolable. If he should choose to regulate his conscience according to reason, the Christian can hope to do little but persuade him by moral demonstration of the divinity of the Bible. If, however, he will accept no other criteria than self-evident principles, then nothing but the grace of God can correct his erroneous conscience. The Christian has no right to violate the conscience of other be they pagan, Jew or atheist, because even the certitude of his own convictions is based entirely upon the grace of God.

Although Bayle argued his defence of toleration from the only true religious principle, the inviolability of conscience, he allowed one exception to its universal application. He denied religious toleration to Catholics, since of all Christian sects, they alone posed a continuing threat to the political stability of society. Whenever they rose to a position of strength, they invoked the maxim "compel them to come in", and pursued a policy of forceful conversion even to the point of overthrowing legitimate government. The toleration of the Jesuit missionaries in Japan was a mistake, Bayle argued, which the Emperor of Japan had learned to his cost.<sup>71</sup> The Chinese also, he

---

70 GREGOIRE I<sup>er</sup>, note E.

71 JAPON, note E; see also MILTON, note O.

believed"... peut-être se verront-ils obliger plutôt qu'on ne pense à résister à des séditions dangereuses, excitées par les Sectateurs de la nouvelle Religion, & à égorger s'ils ne veulent être égorgez."<sup>72</sup> It was essentially the same argument which Bayle

used to undermine Jurieu's proposed holy crusade against Louis XIV.<sup>73</sup> If the peace and stability of a state were threatened by any of its subjects, the monarch was politically justified in persecuting them, and "... comme le Papism est de tems immémorial le Parti qui persécute le plus, & qu'il ne cesse de tourmenter le corps & l'ame des autres Chrétiens par tout où il le peut faire, c'est principalement à son expulsion que concluent les tolérans les plus outrez."<sup>74</sup>

The arguments which produced this defence of toleration had considerable effect upon Bayle's approach to biblical criticism in the Dictionnaire. From an ecclesiastical point of view at least, the Old Testament had been up to that time the one document for which absolute historical certainty could be claimed. This claim was founded upon the sanctity of the Bible as a source of revelation. Bayle made no move to destroy this sanctity. He emphatically upheld the divinity of the Scriptures, asserting that it could be satisfactorily proved on the basis of moral demonstration. What is more important, he underlined their sanctity by placing the revealed mysteries of Scripture

---

72 MILTON, note O.

73 See Chapter II.

74 MILTON, note O.

beyond the scope of critical reason. By denying a role in religion to philosophical examination, and by placing the certitude of scriptural revelation in the hands of faith, Bayle effectively separated the realms of philosophy and theology.

Not all that was recounted in the Old Testament was explicitly qualified by Scripture, and to this extent Bayle sanctioned a rational criticism of the Bible. There were certain unqualified actions, fallacies, obscurities and inconsistencies in its text which, he maintained, were fair game for the critical historian. Some of the difficulties could be clarified by applying the ordinary criteria of historical evidence; others could be clarified on the basis of moral demonstration, while the remainder must be considered beyond clarification altogether. He made his meaning quite clear:

"... il est très-permis à de petits particuliers comme moi, de juger des faits contenus dans l'Ecriture, lors qu'ils ne sont pas expressément qualifiez par le Saint Esprit. Si l'Ecriture en raportant une action la blâme ou la loue, il n'est plus permis à personne d'appeller de ce jugement; chacun doit régler son aprobation ou son blâme sur le modele de l'Ecriture."<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, most of the criticisms which Bayle made of the Old Testament had direct bearing on his defence of toleration. Just as he had separated the realms of theology from that of philosophy, so too he separated it from the realm of history. Whatever was explicitly revealed or qualified by the Holy Ghost in Scripture was sacred, inviolable and must be accepted on faith. Where facts or actions were not so qualified, the historian was at liberty to apply to principles of

---

75 DAVID, (original article), note I.

criticism in order to clarify them.

Bayle identified an important source of error, obscurity and inconsistency in the numerous copies, glosses and translations of the Bible which had been produced down through the centuries. For example, in note A of AKIBA, he commented upon the inconsistencies which occurred in the two basic translations, the Hebrew (Masoretic) and the Greek (Septuagint) texts, in recording the ages of various biblical figures. In ADAM, note I, he dealt with the difficulties encountered in determining the exact location of Adam's sepulchre, since the various texts gave such widely differing accounts. Beyond the Hebrew and Greek texts, however, there were numerous other translations: the Vulgate of St. Jerome, the French, the Genevan, the Dutch, the Spanish and the official English version of King James. There was the instance of a remark by Lamech taken from Genesis, chapter iv, which was translated in the future tense by the Genevan version, in the past tense by the Vulgate and in the conditional tense by certain Hebrew scholars.<sup>76</sup> On this point Bayle confessed "... j'avoue ingénûment que cela me passe."<sup>77</sup>

A further difficulty was that all translations perpetuated the chronological inconsistencies of the original manuscripts. For example there was the difficulty over Ishmael's age. When Abraham sent Sarah away with her son, Bayle calculated that Ishmael must have

---

76 LAMECH, note C.

77 Ibid., in corp.

been sixteen years of age at least. He remarked "N'est-il pas bien étrange, qu' à cet âge-là, sa mere soit contrainte de le porter sur ses épaules, de le mettre sous un arbrisseau, de le lever, de le prendre dans ses mains, & de lui donner à boire?"<sup>78</sup> Then there was the difficulty about Sarah herself, who was supposed to have retained her beauty till the age of ninety. How was this to be explained? Bayle ignored the sacrosanct traditions which surrounded such facts by stating "Ainsi, sans recourir aux miracles, qu'il faut ménager le plus qu'on peut pour les grands besoins, nous pouvons dire que la bonne constitution de Sara, & l'exemption des couches, & des fonctions de nourrice, ont pu la conserver belle femme jusques à quatre-vingts-dix ans."<sup>79</sup>

While these minor difficulties came well within the scope of the critical historian, Bayle's attention was more often absorbed with more crucial issues of biblical criticism. In the context of his defence of toleration, he sought to condemn the moral conduct of certain scriptural figures, in particular the Old Testament prophets. Where the text of the Bible gave no direct qualification of such conduct, he was anxious to show that when it contradicted the principles of natural morality, his contemporaries were wrong to cite it as a model for conduct in their own times. We gain a glimpse of his intention here, when he remarked on the severity of Sarah's conduct towards Agar:

---

78 AGAR, note H.

79 SARA, note E.

"Qui auroit jamais deviné que cela serviroit un jour d'apologie à ceux qui persécutent les sectes? Cependent l'esprit fécond & imaginatif de St. Augustin y a trouvé ce secret. Il a soutenu par la conduite de Sara envers Agar, que la vraie Eglise peut infliger des châtimens à la fausse, l'exiler, la tourmenter, & ce qui s'ensuit."<sup>80</sup>

In spite of the tone of ridicule which Bayle expressed towards St. Augustine's inventiveness, he took a much more serious view of the lessons which Jurieu derived from the moral conduct of the Old Testament prophets.

The subject of Bayle's closest scrutiny was King David who had long been a central figure in Calvinist theology and who supplied Jurieu with numerous precedents for calling the Huguenots to arms against Louis XIV. We have already taken note of the interpretation which Walter Rex offered for the article DAVID.<sup>81</sup> His view, that Bayle endeavoured to re-affirm the traditions of the past against the threat of change represented by Jurieu's theological innovations and his call to arms against Louis, accords with the whole nature of Bayle's defence of toleration. It was Bayle's opinion that since Scripture gave no clear qualification of David's behaviour, it must be interpreted in the light of natural morality:

---

80 AGAR, note D.

81 See Chapter II, *passim*.

"...on seroit un très-grand tort aux Loix éternelles, & par conséquent à la vraie Religion, si on donnoit lieu aux profanes de nous objecter, que dès qu'un homme a eu part aux inspirations de Dieu, nous regardons sa conduite comme la regle des moeurs; de sorte que nous n'oserions condamner les actions du monde les plus opposées aux notions de l'équité, quand c'est lui qui les a commises. Il n'y a point de milieu; ou ces actions ne valent rien, ou les actions semblables à celles-là ne sont pas mauvaises ... ."82

Bayle's remarks on David's conduct were almost a point for point answer to the arguments Jurieu used to sanction armed Huguenot resistance to Louis XIV.

The purpose of Bayle's remarks on David is underlined elsewhere in his article on Judith. The whole history of this woman was rejected by Protestant theologians as a part of revealed Scripture, a position with which Bayle wholeheartedly concurred, for the example of Judith's behaviour had occasioned terrible calamities in France and the Low Countries. Balthazar Gerard, for instance, a zealous Catholic who had posed as a Protestant in order to assassinate William I of Orange, had found his inspiration in Judith's murder of Holofernes. Bayle remarked of the episode:

"Il n'y a point de doute que l'exemple de cette femme ne puisse persuader à bien des gens, que c'est faire une sainte action que de se glisser à la faveur de mille mensonges chez un Prince qui opprime la Liberté & la Religion; de s'y glisser, dis-je, afin de la poignarder, aussitôt que l'on en aura l'occasion. En un mot, cette Histoire une fois prise pour canonique encourage les assassins à tout entreprendre contre la vie des Rois ennemis, & fournit aux Orateurs une couronne de gloire, pour la mettre sur la tête des Clemens & des Ravallacs."83

---

82 DAVID, (original article), note I.

83 JUDITH, note C.

These last two references are to the Dominican friar James Clement who assassinated Henry III of France on August 1st., 1589, and François Ravaillac who assassinated Henry IV in 1610. Both of these murders were justified by the Jesuits on the basis of Judith's conduct.

Bayle's disapproval of the Old Testament prophets encompassed not only their moral conduct, but their prophecies as well, for these furnished self-styled Protestant prophets like Jurieu, Allix, Gurtler and Joseph Mede with an excuse for predicting the downfall of the Apocalyptical Babylon (the Papacy) on various dates during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>84</sup> Bayle objected that "c'est vouloir introduire le carnage & le massacre par tout, que de parler d'accomplir les Prophéties."<sup>85</sup>

---

84 BRAUNBOM, note C. In this note, written in 1702, Bayle launched a bitter attack on the prophecies of Mede, Allix, Gurtler and in particular Pierre Jurieu. Jurieu drew his inspiration from Mede, predicting the fall of the Catholic Church between 1710-14, following a break between France and the Pope after 1690. He claimed from the example of James II and the English, that Providence would direct the French to submit to a Protestant prince. Bayle's reply was: "Que voilà un homme heureux à conjecturer! Il ne savoit pas, qu'au bout de deux ans, l'Angleterre chasseroit son Roi Papiste, ce qui seroit une preuve que la Providence ne vouloit pas accoutumer les Peuples à se soumettre à un Prince qui ne fût pas de leur Religion; mais plutôt disposer la Nation Française par un exemple tout frais & voisin à desobéir à son Roi, en cas qu'il changeât de Religion. Notez que cet Ecrivain a compté plusieurs miracles parmi les causes qui ont renversé du Throne Jaques II."

85 BRAUNBOM, note C.



He continued:

"... il ne servent qu'à inviter son Ennemi, qui n'est déjà que trop en colere, & à lui fournir cette excuse de ses persécutions, que pour prévenir sa ruine, il est obligé de travailler à celle des Protestans, qui ne cessent de prédire qu'il sera exterminé bientôt par l'épée des mêmes Princes qui ont autrefois adoré la Bête."<sup>86</sup>

Little wonder that Bayle should have spent some time discrediting apocrophal stories about Elijah and Elisha,<sup>87</sup> especially the prediction that Elijah "jugeroit Israël par le feu & par l'épée."<sup>88</sup> It agreed, he remarked, with Elijah's vengeful spirit in destroying the priests of Baal, but

"Les Docteurs de l'intolérance ne sont pas bien aises qu'on les avertisse que Jesus-Christ a aboli cet esprit ... . Je ne m'étonne point qu'ils soient fâchez qu'on les empêche de s'autoriser d'un tel exemple; car que peut-on voir de plus fort en faveur des massacreurs par zèle de Religion que la conduite d'Elie?"<sup>89</sup>

Bayle also turned his attention to criticizing the superstitions of rabbinical tradition which were fostered by the incomprehensibility of biblical revelation. In all religions, superstition provided a convenient explanation for the unnatural, and the Jewish religion was no exception. For example, there were numerous Jewish fables concerning Agar's origin, none of which were credible. It was Bayle's opinion that:

---

86 Ibid.

87 See ELIE, note B; ELISEE, note B.

88 ELIE, in corp.

89 Ibid, note B.

"Ce sont des mysteres, dont il ne faut point être curieux: il faut supposer qu'ils se passent sous les voiles de la nuit, ou derriere le rideau, & les laisser dans leurs ténèbres naturelles. Les Juifs, toujours guindez sur les miracles, attribuent la conversion d'Agar aux prodiges qui se firent chez Pharaon, à cause du rapt de Sara."<sup>90</sup>

The fable that Adam was originally created of both sexes, one side male and the other female, both parts being joined at the shoulder, was equally ridiculous. Although the Jewish rabbis had maintained that God separated the two parts to create Eve, Bayle pointed out that "Il ne faut que savoir lire l'Ecriture, pour réfuter pleinement toutes ces visions."<sup>91</sup> Other fables such as the story of the bone called Luz,<sup>92</sup> Elijah's resignation of his office to Elisha,<sup>93</sup> and the miracles associated with Ezekiel's tomb, all testified to the same point. Scriptural history had been embellished with superstitious explanations of obscure textual passages, many of which required only the natural light of reason to explain them, others of which were beyond explanation altogether. Jewish superstitions, however, were no worse than similar ones upheld by Mahometans, Catholics and Protestants. In every religion, man "soared up to the marvellous" to explain unnatural phenomena.

---

90 AGAR, note A.

91 ADAM, le père tout le genre humain, note F.

92 BARCOCHEBAS, note K.

93 ELISEE, note B.

This conclusion underlined Bayle's treatment of miracles, for he spent a great deal of time in the Dictionnaire showing how unwise it was to explain all unnatural phenomena in terms of the miraculous. Once again he was motivated in this course by his defence of toleration, for Jurieu had been urging the Protestant princes to march against France on the grounds that the Protestant cause was protected by the divine intervention of Providence.<sup>94</sup> Bayle's attitude to miracles was unequivocal: "Je suis persuadé autant que jamais, qu'afin qu'une action soit miraculeuse il faut que Dieu la produise comme une exception aux loix générales: & que toutes les choses, dont il est immédiatement l'auteur selon ces loix-là, sont distinctes d'un miracle proprement dit ... ."95 Biblical miracles were safe within this definition, for where they were explicitly designated as miracles, they had simply to be accepted as revelation on faith. Even the story of Jonah's incarceration in the whale must be accepted as a miracle, for as St. Augustine asserted: "Ou il faut nier ... tous les miracles de Dieu, ou reconoitre qu'on n'a nul sujet de rejeter celui-ci."96 The divinity of the Scripture testified to the truth of biblical miracles, but proof for non-biblical miracles was not so readily available.

---

94 See BRAUNBOM, note B. Also Rex, Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy, pp.218-221, especially p.218, n.58.

95 RORARIUS, note L.

96 JONAS, le prophète, note B.

The criterion upon which Bayle dismissed non-biblical miracles was, as we have seen, the fact that they ultimately depended upon religious prejudices. In the article *CONSTANCE*, he remarked "Or comme il n'y a nulle aparence que Dieu déroge aux loix générales de la nature, que dans les cas où le salut de ses enfans le demande, il ne faut point prendre pour des Miracles ce qui arrive également parmi les infideles, & parmi les fideles."<sup>97</sup> In other words, on the basis of moral demonstration, divine miraculous protection will only be given to the orthodox. Since none can prove their orthodoxy, however, no one is justified in claiming as a miracle a fortuitous event which favoured his cause. Nevertheless, "Il y a des Ministres, à qui tout paroît Miracle dans les événemens qui concernent leur Parti."<sup>98</sup> The target for this remark was Jurieu.<sup>99</sup> He was marvellously free in identifying Protestant miracles to win support for his holy crusade. Furthermore, his attitude to miracles threatened a dangerous heresy. For example, instead of rejecting the story of John Damascen's hand as a "conte monachal",<sup>100</sup> Jurieu denied this Catholic miracle on

---

97. *CONSTANCE*, note B.

98. *Ibid.*

99 Bayle openly condemned Jurieu's publication of so-called Protestant miracles in *ESECHIEL*, note C where he remarked "Combien y a-t-il de choses dans la pratique des Protestans d'aujourd'hui, qu'ils n'eussent pas aprouvées il y a cent ans? Je suis assuré que l'Auteur des Pastorales [Jurieu] a publié plus de faux miracles qu'il ne devoit ... ."

100 *DAMASCENE*, note D. This miracle concerned John Damascen who, after having his hand severed by order of Leo Isauricus, prayed to the Virgin Mary and as a consequence was reputed to have recovered it.

the grounds that the Damascus Saracens failed to renounce Mahometanism and accept Christianity. Did it not follow then that all the miracles performed by Moses and Christ were false because they did not immediately convert the multitudes?

"'Il ne se peut rien dire de plus impie ... car c'est déclarer hautement à la face du ciel & de la terre, qu'il est persuadé que tous les miracles de Moïse de Jesus-Christ, & de ses Apôtres, sont des fables, & par conséquent que l'Ecriture de Vieux & Nouveau Testament n'est qu'un Roman & une Légende.'"101

(This quotation originally came from Déclaration de Mr. Bayle touchant un petit Ecrit qui vient de paroître sous le titre de Courte Revue des Maximes de Morale, which according to Bayle was published in 1691, but according to Dodge was published in 1690). In the face of Jurieu's theological innovations and the threat they represented for religious toleration, it is understandable that Bayle should have devoted so much time to discrediting the miraculous nonsense of Jewish biblical traditions as he did to discrediting the baseless superstition of Mahometanism and Christianity.

The principles of criticism which Bayle applied to the Bible were a part of the general historical method which he bequeathed to the study of history. This method, which is the subject of the next chapter, had its foundations in his defence of toleration. What we have seen so far is the groundwork upon which he based the universal application of these critical principles, but this groundwork forms no

---

101 DAMASCENE, note D.

part of his claim to originality. As a field of endeavour, biblical exegesis had been flourishing for many years before Bayle published his Dictionnaire. In fact many of the points on which he criticized the Bible had been suggested to him through his reading of the works of earlier and contemporary critics. Bayle himself was not a biblical scholar, and it is certain that in this field he was overshadowed by his contemporary, the Jesuit Richard Simon.<sup>102</sup> From a purely historical point of view, however, Bayle's truly original contribution was the clear division which he effected between the sacred theological content and the profane secular content of the Bible. In his enthusiasm to defend toleration, he effectively removed the last remaining obstacle to a completely secular approach to history. It only remains now to examine the criteria and nature of the critical method which he applied to history.

---

102 See Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, deuxième partie, chap. III, for an interesting account of Simon's work in the field of biblical exegesis.

CHAPTER V

TOLERATION, TRUTH AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM

The framework of ideas upon which Bayle based his use of the critical method in history developed more from expediency than anything else: the expediency of providing an unassailable defence of toleration. Like the principles of the method itself, these ideas lie scattered and generally unrelated throughout the Dictionnaire. Wherever Bayle saw an opportunity to attack intolerance, he did so, constructing arguments which were tentatizing in their implications. This was the case during his many encounters with the word "truth", and more especially with the term "historical truth". For Bayle, the final definition which he offered for "historical truth" was the essence of the historical endeavour: "la vérité étant l'ame de l'Histoire, il est de l'essence d'une Composition Historique que le mensonge n'y entre pas ...".<sup>1</sup> This definition, as we shall see, was a distillation from several arguments which he used against intolerance and persecution.

Ultimately, in Bayle's view, the cord of truth had three strands: one physical, one metaphysical and the other moral. There is no single, all inclusive definition of the three to be found in the Dictionnaire, although a collective discussion of them appears in at

---

1 REMOND, note D.

least one article.<sup>2</sup> To each of the three Bayle ascribed a distinctive set of criteria, which clearly separated each one from the other two, but these distinctions were drawn as the result of separate arguments.

In Chapter III we observed that through his efforts to counter persecution based upon the idea of Providential determinism, Bayle was obliged to draw a very firm line between the criteria for proving religious and philosophical truths. It becomes apparent from what he said elsewhere in the Dictionnaire, that the terms "religious" and "philosophical" can be respectively equated with the more broadly based terms "moral" and "physical". Moral or religious truths, Bayle argued, require only demonstration of faith as proof, whereas meta-physical or philosophical truths must stand up to the rigorous tests of reason.<sup>3</sup> Through these definitions he was able to show that there was no necessary relationship between the two varieties of truth. In fact: "... bien loin que ce soit le propre de ces Véritez de s'accorder avec la Philosophie, il est au contraire de leur essence de ne se pas ajuster avec ses Regles."<sup>4</sup> From this distinction Bayle was able to indicate the futility of attempting to justify persecution on the

---

2 BEAULIEU, note F. For alternative discussions of Bayle's definition of the term "truth", see James, "Scepticism and Fideism in Bayle's Dictionnaire", p.323, n.3 and Labrousse, Pierre Bayle, II, chap.3, *passim*.

3 BEAULIEU, note F. See also "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.613.

4 "Eclaircissement sur les Manichéens", Dictionnaire, IV, p.620.



basis that the hand of Providence guides the successful religious cause, although the distinction had a more general significance for his defence of toleration.

It was in the article BEAULIEU that Bayle drew the further distinction between moral and historical truths. In note F, he upbraided Jurieu for having confused moral demonstration with the proof necessary to establish that there was such a man as Julius Caesar or such a republic as Rome. Jurieu, he argued, completely misunderstood the nature of moral demonstration. Although the levels of certainty to be associated with the divinity of the Scriptures and with historical facts appear on the surface to be similar, they are in fact quite different. The proof of a moral truth extends "depuis une grande probabilité, jusques à une très-grande probabilité",<sup>5</sup> while the proof of an historical truth lies simply in "son existence aparente".<sup>6</sup> The evidence for scriptural divinity rests on human faith, while the evidence for historical facts resides in scientific analysis:

"... la certitude & l'évidence avec laquelle nous conoissons qu'il y a eu un Jules Cesar, une République Romaine, &c., ne passent pas pour une science, mais pour une foi humaine, pour une opinion, & tout au plus pour l'effet d'une démonstration morale: ... la certitude & l'évidence, avec laquelle nous conoissons qu'il y a eu une République Romaine, soit une simple démonstration morale, & que notre persuasion à cet égard soit une acte de foi humaine, ou une opinion. C'est une science proprement dite ... ."7

---

5 BEAULIEU, note F.

6 "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.613.

7 BEAULIEU, note F.

A few lines later he remarked of the existence of a Roman republic that "Il y a là pour le moins une démonstration physique"<sup>8</sup> clearly indicating that historical truth was to be placed on the same level as physical truth.

Later in the Dictionnaire Bayle drew a clear distinction between historical and metaphysical truths. In the following quotation he spoke of the metaphysical certainty associated with geometry:

"On me dira, peut-être, que ce qui semble le plus abstrait & le plus instructueux dans les Mathématiques apporte du moins cet avantage, qu'il nous conduit à des vérités dont on ne sauroit douter; au lieu que les Discussions Historique, & les Recherches des Faits humains, nous laissent toujours dans les ténèbres, & toujours quelques semences de nouvelles contestations. Mais qu'il y a peu de prudence à toucher à cette corde!"<sup>9</sup>

Between physical and metaphysical, or more precisely between historical and geometrical truths there exists quite a different level of certainty, and on the basis of this fact he asserted that "les Vérités Historiques peuvent être poussées à un degré de certitude plus indubitable, que ne l'est la degré de certitude à quoi l'on fait parvenir les Vérités Géométriques ...".<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the indivisible rational proofs required for geometrical truth, historical facts needed only their apparent existence to be proved for them to be able to attain the highest degree of certainty possible.

Although the distinction he drew between religious and

---

8 BEAULIEU, note F.

9 "Projet". Dictionnaire, IV, p.613.

10 Ibid.

philosophical truths can be clearly shown to have been a vital stage in his defence of toleration, why should Bayle have bothered about such an exact definition of historical truth? He did not make his reasons for doing so entirely explicit, but he offered a clue in the article REMOND when he said:

"Je conclus de là qu'afin d'être propre à composer une bonne Histoire, il faut avoir la conscience si ennemie du mensonge, qu'elle ne vous permette pas de mentir non pas même à l'avantage de votre Religion & de vos plus tendres amis, ni au desavantage d'une Secte impie, & de vos plus implacables persécuteurs."<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the Dictionnaire, Bayle repeatedly emphasized that religious prejudice was one of the principal bulwarks of intolerance and persecution, and at the time the work was being written, the humanists had turned history into a battlefield for religious controversy. When historians themselves so consistently displayed their religious prejudices, Bayle remonstrated "Comment donc se siera-t-on à un Historiographe à qui le zèle de Religion fait prendre éternellement l'un après l'autre le caractere d'Apologiste, & celui d'Accusateur, & qui proprement convertit l'Histoire en un ouvrage de Controverse d'une nouvelle méthode?"<sup>12</sup>

Elsewhere he informs us:

"Dans les Disputes de Religion chacun est juge & partie: car on n'examine point les raisons de son Adversaire après s'être revêtu d'un esprit sceptique & pyrrhonien: on croiroit commettre un crime, si l'on se mettoit en cet état; on examine donc étant bien persuadé, que la Religion que l'on professe est la seule véritable."<sup>13</sup>

---

11 REMOND, note D.

12 BRENZIUS, note B.

In other words, Bayle's sensitivities were aroused by the danger of intolerance displayed in historical writing when the humanists showed more concern for a moral truth than for the accuracy of historical facts. He was obliged to make this distinction between historical and religious truths quite rigid before he could set about attacking prejudice and intolerance in historians.

The unique definitions which Bayle ascribed to physical and moral truths provided him with a basis from which to use the principles of criticism to attack prejudice and intolerance in historians. On the one hand, physical or historical truths were capable of being proven to the absolute degree of certainty peculiar to them. In other words, they were unitary, identifiable and capable of absolute physical proof. Moral or religious truths, on the other hand, were not unitary, identifiable or capable of absolute proof since their evidence depended upon human faith. It was impossible to identify them with certainty. Consequently Bayle was able to argue that all religious beliefs should be tolerated, since none could be proven or disproven with an absolute degree of certainty. By differentiating between historical and religious truth, Bayle drew a final and irrevocable distinction between history and theology, thus providing himself with a logical foundation upon which to base his use of the principles of criticism to attack intolerance in the religious prejudices displayed by historians.

The concept of a "triple" truth also had considerable bearing

on his view of the purpose of history. Like most humanist historians, he believed that there was a considerable moral instruction to be found in the pages of history. Unlike most of the humanists, he related this moral instruction not to any conception of a religious morality, but to specific lessons concerning toleration. As we have already observed, Bayle used the example of the French Wars of Religion to show that political instability would frequently lead to intolerance and persecution in religion, but the validity of such lessons depended upon accurate and unprejudiced historical accounts. The moral instruction of which history was capable could only come from historical narratives based upon the truth of verifiable facts. Such a truth of its nature had to be unitary and capable of achieving absolute certainty. When historians confused moral truth with historical truth, the history they wrote was incapable of achieving absolute certainty, and no value could be placed upon its moral instruction.

This relationship between Bayle's defence of toleration and his use of the critical method in history has generally been neglected by historians. Since 1930 "Bayle" scholars have been inclined to relate his use of the critical method in history almost solely to three particular developments of late seventeenth century historiography: the decline in research standards among the humanist historians; the "critical" reaction to this of historians like Mabillon, Duchesne, Baluze, Leibniz, Montfaucon and the Bollandists; and the tradition of biblical exegesis associated with names like Bodin, Tillemont and Richard Simon. While these developments seem to provide a convenient

framework in which to place Bayle's critical method in history, they in fact ignore seventeenth century characteristics which were equally, if not more, influential in the realm of historiography. In emphasizing these particular developments, present day critics may well be attributing the secular motives of the twentieth century historian to his seventeenth century counterpart. One factor, for example, which such critics frequently understate, but nevertheless implicitly accept, is the connection between religion and history in the seventeenth century. Religious disputes were still among the most important problems for the historian of the 1690's, and religious persecution was an even more pressing problem for a Huguenot historian in voluntary exile in Holland.

While the attention of current historians has tended to be absorbed by the reaction of some seventeenth century historians to the pitiful standards accepted by the humanists, virtually nothing is said of the fact that most of the humanists were, if not clerics, at least noteworthy for their unmistakable religious bias. Paul Hazard, for example, writing in the early 1930's, placed his stress upon the fact that in his old age Varillas repeatedly dictated his histories without bothering to check a single fact.<sup>14</sup> He remarked further that Vertot, having just completed his history of the siege of Malta, answered a colleague who referred him to the discovery of new documents "J'en suis fâché, mais mon siège est fait." Even the priest Father Daniel, whom Voltaire had described as "instruit, exact, sage et

---

14 Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, p.29.

vrai",<sup>15</sup> is noted by Hazard for having abandoned his labours after spending only one hour in the archives of the royal library because they proved more pain than profit. A more recent critic, E. H. Brumfitt, writing in the early 1950's, indicted Saint-Réal and Vertot for their pre-occupation with psychological and dramatic effect in history at the expense of accuracy.<sup>16</sup> Even Mezerai and Daniel whom he praised for trying "to maintain the best tradition of humanist historiography",<sup>17</sup> displayed a decided moral and artistic pre-occupation. Neither Hazard nor Brumfitt has paid particular attention to the deference which such historians gave to the power of the French monarchy.

It was only recently, in 1956, that the Frenchman Antoine Adam focused attention for the first time on the tail side of the coin, the side upon which Bayle's attention was focused. Adam comments that "la plus lourde des servitudes était sans aucune doute, pour l'histoire, celle que faisait peser le pouvoir royal."<sup>18</sup> Seventeenth century France was a state still based upon an absolute monarchy and a privileged church, and because its historians were shackled to the royal power, so too were they restrained by the cords of religion. Their very names betrayed their Catholic prejudices: Father Bouffier, Father Daniel, Father Maimbourg, Bossuet, Mezerai, Moreri, Saint-Réal,

---

15 Quoted in Brumfitt, Voltaire: Historian. London, O.U.P., 1958, p.27.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. V, p.329.

Varillas, Vertot. Not all of them were deliberately inaccurate or careless scholars, but few tried to conceal their religious sympathies, or stem the tide of religious controversy which was inundating history. For a man so passionately opposed to prejudice in any form, it is hardly surprising that Bayle should have attributed many of the faults in humanist historians to their partisanship and religious prejudice.

While a new wave of criticism might be enough to inspire a modern scholar to re-examine the tools of his profession, it is not enough to attribute the same motives to his seventeenth century counterpart. The new wave of erudite historical scholarship which was born during the seventeenth century undoubtedly influenced Bayle, and at the very least we know that he was acquainted with many of the works of the new critical scholars from the time he spent editing the Nouvelles de la République des lettres. He confessed his awareness of the movement when he remarked in the Dictionnaire:

"Pour un chercheur d'Expériences Physiques, pour un Mathématicien, vous trouvez cent personnes qui étudient à fond l'Histoire avec toutes ses dépendances; & jamais la Science de l'Antiquariat, je veux dire l'étude des Médailles, des Inscriptions, des Bas-reliefs, &c., n'avoit été cultivée comme elle l'est présentement."<sup>19</sup>

But the growth of this critical spirit in the seventeenth century scarcely inspired the majority of humanist historians to adopt a more exacting and critical approach to history. To be sure we know that Daniel was influenced by the new erudition, but he was the exception rather than the rule. Thus the question remains: why did Bayle, among all the humanist, develop such a deep enthusiasm for the principles

---

<sup>19</sup> "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.612.



of criticism in history?

In the first place, he had a distinct natural advantage over the majority of other humanist historians: he was not a member of the established Catholic Church in France. Under other circumstances, this might not have been such a particular advantage, since he was a self-confessed member of the equally intransigent Reformed Church. His double conversion, however, had taught him to mistrust all form of orthodoxy, a necessary step in the development of his tolerant attitude to religion. Of greater importance was the fact that being beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, he was also beyond the direct influence of the royal power in France, a situation underlined by his exile in Holland. His idea of history was freed from the traditional biases which overwhelmed his contemporaries living in France, and this allowed him to break more easily with the traditions of seventeenth century historiography.

Secondly, when present day critics endeavour to trace a continuity of tradition in the history of ideas, they imply too great a continuity of motives. It is in the field of biblical exegesis that we can most clearly see the dangers of reading twentieth century motives into a seventeenth century situation. Although Bayle was interested in biblical exegesis, this does not mean that his motives were necessarily the same as other interested in the field. As we have already observed in the previous chapter, Bayle's interest in the field centred primarily around his attack on religious orthodoxy, which he viewed as one of the principal causes of persecution. It was this essentially non-

scholastic motive which enabled him to achieve more than most in the field of biblical criticism.

A general interest in this field can be traced back at least to Jean Bodin who in his Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem of 1566 endeavoured to free secular history from the control of scriptural and patristic authority by insisting on the division of history into three natural parts: human, natural and divine. Lenain de Tillemont eventually came to the same conclusion, although he insisted on a strong relationship between sacred and profane history, one being incomprehensible without the other. Both Bodin and Tillemont sought the same end: a clear division between theology and history, but they were unable to formulate a satisfactory basis upon which to make such a division. Richard Simon, writing at about the same time as Bayle, undertook a critical examination of the Old Testament in his Histoire critique du Vieux Testament (1678) to determine its textual accuracy and authenticity. Others had followed the same path, among them Samuel Bochart, Louis Capelle and Spinoza. It is misleading, however, to say of this spirit of criticism as Paul Hazard has done "tel était l'esprit du temps",<sup>20</sup> for as I have previously remarked, this implies too great a continuity of motive. To Bayle at least, such an assertion cannot apply. Although his methods and conclusions may bear a resemblance to those of other biblical critics, his primary object in criticising the Old Testament was an entirely individual one.

---

20 Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, p.167.

Bayle made a thorough examination of the causes of distortion, exaggeration or suppression of truth in history, but inevitably we must be prepared to search from AARON to XENOPHANES to find them. The Dictionnaire is remarkable for the way in which the principle of criticism are inculcated into the reader's mind. Bayle gave no clear exposition of these principles, largely because the nature of his dictionary did not permit this. The rules are scattered throughout scores of incidental remarks, but frequently they appear so unexpectedly that the reader imbibes them almost without thinking, through what Elisabeth Labrousse calls a "homeopathic treatment".<sup>21</sup> For the sake of clarity, we shall try to impose some order on Bayle's incidental remarks, and present the principles of his critical method in a more ordered format than they appear in the Dictionnaire.

Since the critical approach is concerned primarily with establishing historical truth, it is essential to understand the various ways in which this truth has been or can be distorted, exaggerated, suppressed or altered. Elisabeth Labrousse, who has published the most erudite study of Bayle's critical method to date,<sup>22</sup> divides these causes into two categories, which she labels "involuntary" and "voluntary" causes. The former are the product of laziness, ignorance or carelessness

---

21 Elisabeth Labrousse, "La méthode critique chez Pierre Bayle et l'histoire", Revue internationale de philosophie, xi, (1957), pp.450-66.

22 Ibid. See also her book Pierre Bayle, tome 2, chap. I.

or what Bayle called "dimness or smallness of mind", while the latter proceed from passion, private interest and prejudice, summarized by Bayle as the products of "bad faith". Bayle discovered this bad faith not only in the historian's witnesses, but in the historian himself, and even if they did not refer to it by name, he and his contemporaries were at least aware of the mechanisms of a complete subconscious psychology in man.<sup>23</sup> But let us begin our discussion of Bayle's critical method by examining the less pericious, "involuntary" sources of falsification in history.

Perhaps the most obvious source of such falsifications, and one which confronts us every day, is the unreliability of memory. In ALEXANDER ab ALEXANDRO, we find that Bayle remarked "la mémoire est un moule où les objets changent de forme très-aisément."<sup>24</sup> It is a weak and unreliable faculty which very quickly distorts and blurs the true facts:

"... il est certain généralement parlant que les objets de le mémoire sont d'une nature très-différente de celle des objets de la vue. Ceux-ci diminuent à proportion de leur distance, & ceux-là pour l'ordinaire grossissent à mesure qu'on est éloigné de leur tems & de leur lieu."<sup>25</sup>

When someone witnesses an event or listens to a story, he will generally only retain the essential facts because the details will present too great a burden for his attention and memory. Consequently when he is called upon to repeat these details some days or weeks later, he will allow his imagination free scope to fill in the missing details, thus allowing errors and misconceptions to creep into his account. These

---

23 Ibid., p.458.

24 ALEXANDER ab ALEXANDRO, note E.

25 GREGOIRE I<sup>er</sup>, in corp.

exaggerations and distortions will in turn find their way into the historian's hands, and where there is more than one witness to be found the errors will be multiplied accordingly:

"Les Lecteurs retiennent mieux le gros & le fond d'un fait, que les circonstances: ils veulent donc le rapporter, ils suppléent le mieux qu'ils peuvent ce qu'ils en ont oublié; & comme les goûts sont différens, il arrive que les uns suppléent une chose, les autres une autre."<sup>26</sup>

Elsewhere Bayle asserted that "On falsifie encore plus ce que l'on a ouï dire, que ce qu'on a lu",<sup>27</sup> which raises the particular question of the evidence based upon hearsay reports. Testimony transmitted by word of mouth through several witnesses must be rendered suspect, if only because each witness will forget certain essentials and freely embellish others out of his imagination. As an illustration of the unreliability of hearsay testimony, we can take Bayle's discussion of a report from Mr. Labrune's book Journey into Switzerland in which the author asserted that Fabio Chigi, who subsequently became Pope Alexander VII, had considered becoming a convert of the Protestant faith. Bayle remarked of this report "La chose ne sauroit manquer d'appartenir à ce Dictionnaire. Est-elle véritable? ils s'en font entant qu'historique: est-elle fausse? il s'en saisit entant que critique."<sup>28</sup> Labrune's evidence was based upon a conversation alleged to have taken place between the Duke of Longueville and Mr. Amyraut senior. Amyraut's son, however, had personally assured Bayle that he knew nothing of any

---

26 ANAXAGORUS, note M.

27 Ibid.

28 CHIGI, Fabio, note G.

such conversation, so there was considerable doubt as to whether it ever actually took place. Bayle concluded his footnote with the following remark:

"... nous avons ici un exemple qui nous avertit, combien il faut de défier des Contes qui ne sont fondez que sur l'ouï-dire. A l'heure qu'il est, je tiens l'Auteur de ce Voiage de Suisse pour pleinement persuadé, qu'on doit être soigneusement sur ses gardes contre ces sortes de traditions."<sup>29</sup>

Whether the evidence of a witness is based upon hearsay or simply relies upon memory, the historian should always be on his guard, and believe very little of what he reads of is told. Instead he should ask "... si les faits qu'on conte ont été mis par écrit au tems de leur nouveauté; & si on lui dit que non, mais que la mémoire s'en est conservée de pere en fils & de vive voix, il sait bien que le Pyrrhonisme est le parti de la sagesse."<sup>30</sup>

Although an historian is at liberty to mention hearsays, he should never assert them as true, unless he can furnish adequate critical proofs of them. In the article BEZE Bayle castigated Mezerai for maintaining as true a report that Beza was guilty of sodomy. As he explained:

"S'il s'étoit contenté de dire qu'on lisoit dans plusieurs Ecrits imprimez, que Theodore de Beze fut accusé de cette abomination, il ne faudroit pas le trouver étrange; car il n'avanceroit rien qui ne soit très-vrai. On pourroit citer peut-être deux cens Auteurs, qui, se copiant les uns les autres, ont parlé de ce Procès, Mezerai va beaucoup plus loin: il soutient la chose, il s'en rend caution, & il n'en sauroit produire nulle preuve; c'est ce qu'on peut appeller la conduite d'un Historian étourdi."<sup>31</sup>

---

29 Ibid.

30 ESOPE, note B.

31 BEZE, note U.

Even Father Maimbourg, who compounded Mezerai's offence, could only cite historians like Bolsee, Spondanus, Florimond de Remond and Claudius de Xaintes, none of whom had furnished any clear proof of Beza's guilt. Such an unsubstantiated accusation could only be the result of the most violent religious hatred. These historians should have been amply equipped to discover the evidence, especially as it was in their interest to do so. But no evidence was forthcoming, in which case it must be deduced that none existed. If this were so, then it is an inescapable conclusion that the accusation was false and chimerical. Mezerai and the others ought perhaps to have followed the example of the historian Naudaeus, who came across several stories concerning the amorous follies of Augustin Niphus, but since:

"... il n'étoit pas assuré qu'ils fussent aussi véritables que vraisemblables, il ne crut pas qu'il fut de la charité ni de l'équité de les publier. Je cite ses paroles, avec d'autant plus de plaisir qu'elles donnent un exemple de ce qu'il faut faire par rapport aux Contes qui n'ont pour apui que l'ouï-dire."<sup>32</sup>

As Elisabeth Labrousse has pointed out, these observations introduced an important implication for the historical critic, that of the relative value of testimonies. It is obvious that the value of evidence diminishes in proportion to the distance in time and space which separates an author from what he is reporting. When more than one witness intervenes between the event and its final reporter, their testimony loses all value. Nothing should deter the critic from assuring himself that his witnesses have put their recollections down in writing without delay. Testimony is not to be valued by the number of witnesses

---

32 NIPHUS, Augustin, note F.

but by their reliability in reporting what they claim to have heard or seen.

Essentially it is the duty of every critic to lay aside credulity, and to adopt the habit of methodical doubt. Craig B. Brush is correct in asserting that what Bayle practices is not historical pyrrhonism, but rather "la doute méthodique",<sup>33</sup> for Bayle himself assures us that "L'extrême crédulité à quelques égards, & l'extrême incrédulité à quelques autres, s'accordent si bien ensemble dans un même homme qu'elles naissent l'une de l'autre."<sup>34</sup> The critic must guard as much against extreme incredulity as extreme credulity. The purpose and value of his work resides in being able to salvage from amongst all the lies, falsehoods and misrepresentations of history some element of historical truth.

Even when the critic has satisfied himself that his evidence is valid, he still faces the fundamental problems involved in the reproduction of documents. What of all the unconscious errors of printers, copyists, abridgers, commentators, compilers and translators? Misquoting, mis-spelling of names, misprinting of dates, careless translations, these are hazards which a work of history must encounter before it reaches the public. Simple printing mistakes, for example, have produced many unnecessary errors such as occurred in a mathematical tract written by Blancanus, where the printers inserted "Neronis" for "Heronis". Bayle remarked of this:

---

33 Brush, Montaigne and Bayle, p.253.

34 PAGESSE, note G.



"... voilà comment les Imprimeurs multiplient les Ecrivains. Il y a des Compilateurs, qui pour montrer qu'ils enchérissent sur ceux qui les ont précédés, donneront peut-être comme une rare découverte qu'il y avoit anciennement un habile Mathématicien nommé Neron, dont on a encore quelques Ouvrages."<sup>35</sup>

Moreover there was the error of those historians who maintained on the basis of a document in which the printers had inadvertently changed the word "Theriacarum" to read "Theoricarum", that Andromachus was the first to write concerning the theory of the planets.<sup>36</sup> And what of those transcribers who "confondent un fait avec leurs propres conjectures, ou avec les conséquences qu'ils en tirent",<sup>37</sup> and then insert those conjectures into the body of the narrative as though the original author had maintained them? How many quotations have been carelessly translated or wrongly transcribed? How many glosses have been confused with the original text? Examples of such carelessness are everywhere to be found, waiting to mislead the unwary historian who fails to subject his evidence and sources to a rigorous process of criticism.

These observations alone should be enough to shake the critic's faith in his text, but there is also another category of factors, considerably more pernicious, which are responsible for falsifications in history. They are the "voluntary" or conscious causes, and reflect the workings of passion and emotion in the historian. These are the factors which allow us to trace more precisely the relationship between Bayle's appeal for toleration, his historical milieu and his critical method.

---

35 COMMANDIN, note B.

36 ANDROMAQUE, note A.

37 PHASIS, note A; also VIRGILE, Polydore, note A.

As we observed earlier in the chapter, one of the most obvious characteristics of seventeenth century French historiography, and one frequently understated by present day historians, was the close relationship between historians, most of whom were Catholic, the Church and the Monarchy. Many historians wrote in the service of the state or depended on its favour, while many of the remainder were members of the clergy. The last twenty-five years of the century were also a period of intense religious controversy. By the early 1680's, the great Catholic historian Bossuet had been drawn into open debate with the Protestant controversialist Jurieu over such questions as absolute monarchy and popular sovereignty. Others like Varillas and Saint-Réal merely sniped from a distance. Very few historians endeavoured to conceal their religious prejudice, and fewer still paid much heed to objectivity in their writings. Historical scholarship became increasingly coloured by emotion, and by the intense religious prejudices of its writers. For Bayle, who had already identified passion and prejudice as the primary causes of intolerance and persecution, the discovery of these emotions in historical writing was particularly significant.

It is hardly surprising that much of the time which Bayle spent in elaborating the principles of criticism in the Dictionnaire was devoted to unmasking the passions and emotions of historians. As he remarked to his readers: "Une des plus grandes utilitez qu'on puisse tirer de la lecture est d'apprendre les foiblesses du coeur humain, & les mauvais effets des préjugés de Religion."<sup>38</sup> The historian's emotions will persistently intrude into his writings, and even good faith and

---

38 BERTELIER, note G.

sincerity are not sufficient to ensure that truth will always prevail. At this point we can appreciate one of the implications of Bayle's definition of a "triple" truth. For example a partisan bias can produce falsifications in history which are the result of complete sincerity and the best of faith. An historian can falsify an account to the advantage of his religion, and do so in the belief that it is a service rendered for truth. According to Bayle's definition, however, the service is rendered for moral and not historical truth. Many historians will falsify the truth "... lors que l'intérêt de Parti aura plus de part à ce qu'on dira, que les idées de l'ordre, que les idées de l'honnête, que l'amour de la vérité en général."<sup>39</sup> The qualification "en général" is important, for as Bayle continued: "Je dis 'en général'; & ce sont deux choses bien différentes, qu'aimer la vérité en elle-même. & qu'aimer le Parti que l'on a une fois pris pour le véritable, & que l'on est bien résolu de ne prendre jamais pour faux."<sup>40</sup> Simple religious faith, while it is to be accepted and tolerated as a moral truth, will always blind the historian to the ultimate truth of history. Obviously Bayle's definition of a "triple" truth was necessary, if his attack on the instincts of religious zeal in the historian was to be unimpeded.

Historical scholarship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided Bayle with more than enough examples of passion and prejudice at work in the historian. In reading the history of these two centuries the critic very quickly learns that: "... l'intérêt de Parti, & le zèle pour sa propre Cause, & plus encore la haine pour l'autre Religion,

---

39 BLONDEL, David, note I.

40 Ibid.

engagent un Ecrivain à exagérer, ou à supprimer, ou à exténuer, ou à déguiser les choses selon qu'elles peuvent servir ou nuire à l'honneur de son Parti."<sup>41</sup> Florimond de Remond was just such an historian. A zealous Catholic, he was completely unable to suppress his zeal when writing history. As Bayle remarked, Remond was the unfittest man in the world to undertake the writing of l'Histoire de la naissance, progresz, & décadence de l'Hérésie de ce Siècle. Apart from what he might have lacked in learning, judgement, wit and style: "... quand il n'auroit point eu d'autres défauts que ceux que son zèle pour le Catholicisme, & sa haine pour le Protestantisme, produisoient en lui, il auroit dû reconoitre qu'il s'engageoit à un Ouvrage qui passoit ses forces."<sup>42</sup> As an historian, Remond should have first examined his conscience and sounded his prejudices before he presumed himself equipped to write about such a subject. Instead he accused the Protestants of injustice, extolled the wisdom and innocence of the Catholics, used injurious epithets and outrageous phrases, and utilized insignificant quotations. In truth:

"Le meilleur conseil, qu'on eût pu donner à Florimond de Remond, eût été qu'il continuât à faire des Livres de Controverse, où la passion est permise, & qu'il ne se mêlât point d'être Historien, emploi qui n'étoit pas convenable à un aussi bon Catholique que lui & qu'il faloit laisser à des tièdes, & à des indifférens."<sup>43</sup>

Moreover the example of Florimond de Remond was not an isolated one. Could Bossuet or Maimbourg be considered lukewarm or indifferent men? Was the Histoire du calvinisme anything more than a passionate

---

41 REMOND, note D.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

triade against the Protestant faith? Nor was the weight of passion all on the side of the Catholics. Bayle typically reflected his own efforts at non-partisanship by adding the following remark concerning Protestant historians:

"Je croi aussi que l'on feroit bien de conseiller à un zèle Huguenot de n'entreprendre jamais ni l'Histoire du Calvinisme, ni celle du Luthéranisme, ni celle de l'Edit de Nantes, ni aucune autre de cette nature. Vous avez le coeur ulcéré, lui devoit-on dire vous avez conçu de la haine pour les persécuteurs, vous êtes rongé d'un zèle ardent pour votre Cause, vous nous donneriez, non pas une Histoire, mais des écritures d'Avocat, vous de feriez que blâmer le Parti contraire, & que louer, ou justifier votre Parti: cela ne se pourroit faire sans quelques petits péchez d'omission & de commission."<sup>44</sup>

Truth is the soul of history, and passion the enemy of truth. In a Europe still shuddering from the convulsions of religious persecution, no historian, Catholic or Protestant, could avoid the taint of prejudice or hope to write an impartial history of his times.

Beyond this general condemnation of the bias of historians, Bayle used the critical method of highlight the mechanics of prejudice in historical scholarship. He firmly believed that nothing teaches better than the discipline of a critic, and indeed nothing could have been better suited to teaching the hazards and futility of intolerance than the principles of criticism. He focused the critic's attention on textual criticism, for it was here that the mechanics of prejudice could most readily be exposed. He believed that textual criticism applied as much to historical writing as to any other, but since history was primarily concerned with describing and recounting actual situations and events, the need for accuracy was paramount.

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

To emphasize this point, Bayle alluded to the responsibility which historians had to succeeding generations, that of preserving historical truth. He remarked, when discussing a dispute between the Jesuit Campion and the Englishman Whitaker, that the more deeply we examine the controversy which centred around Campion's allegation that Luther had called St. James's Epistle a work of straw, the more difficult it is to determine the truth.<sup>45</sup> Even the historians Daillé and Rivet, working less than a century later, could not accurately unravel the course of the dispute. If the mists of only one century could obscure the truth, how will succeeding generations ever succeed in unravelling the facts of history? "Plus on examine ces choses, plus on sent que c'est un travail d'Hercule que d'entreprendre de démêler la vérité au milieu de tant de déguisemens & de tant de supercheries."<sup>46</sup> Faults which mislead the greatest number of readers are the most dangerous. Consequently historians should forbear writing, rather than fill their histories with lies "car il importe au public que tout ce que l'on imprime soit bien certain."<sup>47</sup> The danger is that lies get into print

"... &, dès là, on sème un mensonge, dont la graine ne se perd jamais, ... . Le premier qui le publie n'est pas long-tems le seul qui l'ait publié: on ne chomme pas à le faire passer de Livre en Livre, comme un grand motif de zèle, ou comme un objet de réflexions."<sup>48</sup>

Lies and errors should not be written down or at the very least committed to print, for:

---

45 LUTHER, note N.

46 Ibid., note O.

47 BASTA, George, note B.

48 ALCIAT, Jean Paul, note D.

"... l'impression les éternise, & les fait servir de fondement aux historiens: ce qui répand sur l'Histoire un caës impénétrable d'incertitude, qui dérobe aux siècles suivans la connoissance de la vérité ... ."49

One of the most evident examples of the presence of prejudice in historical writing was the intrusion into history of satire and flattery. "Les deux pestes de l'Histoire", Bayle called them, "deux sources qui empoisonnent les relations des événemens humains".<sup>50</sup> They were common enough as literary techniques among those seventeenth century historians who cared more for artistic effect than scholarly objectivity. History abounded with satires and panegyrics of kings, prelates and statesmen, all of which included some facts which historians did not scruple to publish and excluded other which they dared not publish.<sup>51</sup>

When ranking satire and flattery in order of iniquity, however, Bayle remarked "on peut dire que la contagion d'une plume médisante, & dirigée par la haine & par le ressentiment, est plus pernicieuse à l'Histoire que la contagion des Panégyristes."<sup>52</sup> The satirist, whose labour confounds truth with every stroke of his pen, not only suppresses but also distorts and grossly exaggerates the essential facts of history. Of Timaeus, the Greek historian and satirist, who had been banished from Sicily by Agathocles during the CXXIII Olympiad, Bayle remarked:

---

49 "Dissertation sur les libelles diffamatoires", Dictionnaire, IV, p.582, note B.

50 MARILLAC, Louis de, note A.

51 REMOND, note D.

52 MARILLAC, Louis de, note A.

"Sa passion la plus favorite étoit d'imprimer un caractere de médisance sur ses Discours: il aimoit naturellement à critiquer & à censurer. C'est pourquoi une Histoire de sa façon n'eût jamais pu être bonne, quand même il eût possédé les autres talens qui sont nécessaires aux Historiens."<sup>53</sup>

While Agathocles lived, Timaeus suppressed his resentment, but after the king's death, he discharged a torrent of rage against him, describing not only his crimes and ill qualities, but even contriving to invent further calumnies against him. "Le souvenir de cette injure, & de ce dommage, se présente à tout moment, pour crier vengeance aux oreilles de l'Ecrivain",<sup>54</sup> to such an extent that Timaeus suppressed all and any laudable qualities which Agathocles may have possessed. It was inexcusable satire, and it is perhaps a reflexion upon Bayle's motives for remaining so obviously silent on Louis XIV, that he should have concluded his remarks with the following comment: "Les personnes les plus moderées, & les plus modestes, auroient sujet de se défier de leur vertu en écrivant les actions d'un persécuteur."<sup>55</sup>

The critic, in pursuing the suppression of facts in history, is confronted with many difficulties, not least of which is the question of obscenities. Bayle himself had been accused of obscenity in the Dictionnaire, particularly in a number of articles relating to the Bible and certain religious sects. In his defence,<sup>56</sup> he claimed that while lewd or offensive words or facts discovered in common speech or theatrical performances should be condemned, they were permissable in history, for

---

53 TIMEE, note L.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 "Eclaircissement que s'il y a des Obscénitez dans ce Livre, elles sont de celles qu'on ne peut censurer avec raison", Dictionnaire, IV, pp.637-54.



the historian was obliged to faithfully relate everything that pertained to his subject, and would be severely hindered if he were obliged to suppress certain impure facts. Inevitably "il est impossible d'écrire l'Histoire, sans rapporter des actions infames & abominables."<sup>57</sup> Furthermore "il est du devoir d'un Historien, de faire conoître le caractere de ses Acteurs par les traits les plus marquez, qui témoignent l'étendue de leurs vertus ou de leur vices ... ."<sup>58</sup> This did not mean, he asserted, that historians possessed an unlimited licence to publish obscenities. When discussing figures of ancient history, they have a right, indeed a duty, to recount whatever relevant facts they should find in books, whether these deserve "... d'être louées, soit qu'elles méritent l'horreur & l'exécration des Lecteurs."<sup>59</sup> This is a particularly important point in order to preserve the accuracy of quotation. With the life of a modern, however, Bayle placed limitations upon the historian's licence. If an account of some infamous or abominable action is to be discovered in the work of only one author, an historian can be excused from referring to it, if he considers that its publication might present "certains inconvéniens".<sup>60</sup> Where a fact is mentioned by numerous authors, though, it is a useless scruple to suppress it, "... car les Lecteurs trouveront facilement par d'autres voies ce que vous voulez leur cacher."<sup>61</sup> It is difficult to understand why Bayle restricted the historian's licence regarding obscenities with this vague rule of discretion, when he was

---

57 BLONDEL, François 11, note A.

58 DOMITIA, note A.

59 HIPPARCHIA, note D.

60 Ibid.

61 ABDAS, in corp.

generally so outspoken in condemning the suppression of facts:

"... il seroit à souhaiter, que le Public fût plus sévère qu'il ne l'est, contre les Historiens qui suppriment certaines choses. Il y en a si peu, qui ne le fassent, qu'il seroit désormais tems d'y remédier, si on le pouvoit."<sup>62</sup>

Bayle's critical method also denounced those historians who not only suppressed, but distorted, exaggerated and even invented facts. His principal target here was undoubtedly those seventeenth century humanist historians who strove for artistic and dramatic effect in their writings at the expense of historical accuracy. While the mechanisms of religious prejudice were not always responsible for this practice, historical truth was frequently obscured by the distortions and embellishments to be discovered in the accounts of these historians. Moreri, Mezerai, Saint-Réal, Daniel, Vertot were all guilty of inventing and polishing facts and transforming conjectures into affirmations of truth.<sup>63</sup> Some of these historians, Bayle maintained, were excessively inventive and ingenious:

"Je parle de certains Historiens qui ressemblent à Mr. Varillas. Ils aiment à dire ce qui ne se trouve point dans les Histoires ordinaires: ils aspirent à la louange d'avoir déterré des Anecdotes, & les Qualitez occultes des premiers Ministres, avec le secret des Intrigues, & des Négociations que personne n'avoit su."<sup>64</sup>

Poor Varillas! With the exception of Moreri, no other historian's faults were pursued more relentlessly through the pages of the Dictionnaire, and no category of faults was condemned more assertively:

---

62 ARDAS, in corp.

63 See FHASIS, note A.

64 "Dissertation sur les libelles diffamatoires", Dictionnaire, IV, p.581, note A.

"Ce n'est pas assez que de comparer ces indignes Ecrivains à des Harpyes, qui salissent tout ce qu'elles touchent: on peut dire ce sont des bourreaux qui tordent le cou, les bras, & les jambes aux Faits Historiques, & même qui les leur coupent quelquefois, & leur en apliquent de postiches; & cela presque au moment même qu'un événement est sorti du sein de ses causes, & que les exploits d'une Bataille ne font que de naître, ... ."65

If the critical method was useful in revealing the effects of religious prejudice at work in historical writing, its principles of textual criticism were also useful in exposing the deliberate alterations which were made to documents and manuscripts. The principal offenders in this respect, Bayle believed, were the ancient historians:

"Je croi que tous les anciens Historiens ont pris la même licence, à l'égard des vieux Mémoires qu'ils consultoient. Ils y ont cousu des supplémens; & n'y trouvant pas les faits dévelopez & embellis à leur fantaisie, ils les ont étendus, & habillés comme il leur a plu: & aujourd'hui, nous prenons cela pour Histoire."66

This revelation carried considerable significance for historians, since documents and manuscripts were the principle part of the historian's basic equipment. The discovery of one false document, one altered manuscript, cast a shadow of doubt over the authenticity of all historical sources. While so many manuscripts remained suspect, Bayle could only lament "Pauvre Ecrits posthumes, & vous Manuscrits venus des païs lointains, comment peut-on se fier en vous? Qui nous pourra assurer qu'on n'y ôte rien, qu'on n'y ajoute rien ...!"67 How can we be sure? It was truly a situation calling for "la doute methodique".

This doubt which the critical method cast over documentary sources had an important implication for Bayle's appeal for toleration.

---

65 Ibid., in corp., p.584.

66 ABIMELECH, note C.

67 RAYNAUD, note 0.

He recognized that the respective claims to orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches relied heavily on the historical manuscripts of the Scriptures and the writings of the early Church Fathers. But what if these had also been falsified as they were passed down through the centuries? How absurd it was to persecute or even to suffer persecution for the sake of a doctrine based upon doubtful sources:

"Nos prédécesseurs n'ont pas moins songé à nous séduire, que l'on songe présentement à tromper la postérité. Et si pendant qu'un Auteur est plein de vie on ose falsifier ses Ouvrages, qui nous répondra que les Manuscrits des Peres aient été respectez? Qui nous répondra qu'il n'y ait des gens qui souffrent persécution pour soutenir l'artifice d'un Corrupteur de Bibliothèques?"<sup>68</sup>

These then are the fundamental principles of Bayle's critical method, but a few further points remain to be made. To begin with, these principles of criticism presented an important and apparently unsolvable dilemma for the historian. On the one hand, the only testimony which merited any historical authority was that given by a very direct eye-witness and transferred almost immediately to writing. On the other hand, Bayle pointed out, partiality was never more inevitable than in a witness who is personally involved in an event.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the eradication of an "involuntary" source of falsification of facts immediately gives rise to a "voluntary" one. In such a contradictory situation, how is truth to be ascertained? Alfred Cobban's description of the Dictionnaire

---

68 PELLISSON, note F.

69 Labrousse, "La méthode critique chez Pierre Bayle et l'histoire", p.462.

as "a vast reservoir of corrosive erudition"<sup>70</sup> would seem in this light to be thoroughly justified. Bayle would seem to assume the character of a sceptical historian or historical pyrrhonist bent on destroying every vestige of certainty in history. Such an assessment, however, neglects two important factors. First, it is evident from the principles of his method that Bayle's primary concern was for historical criticism to eradicate all sources of falsification arising from the passion and prejudice of historians. Secondly, while the critical method is corrosive up to a point, Bayle clearly admitted the possibility of establishing a certain area of historical truth. For example, the historian could be persuaded about the truth of a story if all opposing parties agree on it, for no one would repeat the story if it disturbed the interests of his party. Also the critic is able to obtain reliable facts even from accounts which are so obviously coloured by prejudice, since everything that contradicts these accounts has a good chance of being true. Then again, the laws of history allow that:

"... on reçoit pour bon ce qui se prouve par le témoignage des Auteurs graves, & l'on rejette comme une Fable tout ce qu'un Moderne débite concernant l'Antiquité ... ."71

Finally, the two basic principles "impossible est tot homines tot faeculis convenire ad mentiendum" and "hoc dicunt tot homines tot faeculis"<sup>72</sup> allow the admittance of a considerable body of facts to the rank of historical

---

70 Cobban, In Search of Humanity, p.65.

71 GUEVARA, note D.

72 BEAULIEU, note F. These premises may be summed up in the syllogism "It is impossible that all men at all times should agree upon a falsehood".

certitude. In this light we can regard Bayle exactly as he was, an ardent critic whose primary concern was the condemnation of passion and prejudice and the removal from history of all taint of religious bias, literary inventiveness and impassioned controversy.

A second point to be considered is the accusation frequently laid against Bayle that he was "minutissimarum rerum minutissimus sciscitator"<sup>73</sup> [a minute examiner of minute affairs], a pedant who lacked discrimination when dealing with historical facts. In the first instance let us hear Bayle's own defence:

"On me reprochera de m'attacher trop à des minuties: je souhaite que l'on sache que je le fais, non pour croire que ces choses sont importantes en elles-mêmes, mais afin d'insinuer par des exemples sensibles qu'il faut s'armer de défiance contre ce qu'on lit, & employer son génie au discernement des faits. Cette application étend & multiplie les forces de l'ame."<sup>74</sup>

While it is true to claim, as many scholars do, that Bayle failed to distinguish between the significant and the insignificant fact, we should be cautious of condemning him for failing to do something that did not come within the scope of his work. We should remember that Bayle was not primarily concerned with formulating a philosophy of history, but rather was intent on pursuing the spectre of intolerance wherever it should appear. Its appearance in seventeenth century historical writing was his excuse for expounding the principles of criticism, and his purpose was merely to teach his readers to discern errors, handle

---

73 "Projet", Dictionnaire, IV, p.611.

74 CAPPADOCE, note K.

historical sources with caution and be continually on guard against the iniquities of passion and prejudice. The problem of factual discrimination between the significant and the insignificant fact carried no particular importance for Bayle's defence of toleration, and we can presume that it lay well beyond the scope of his interests. It is worth noting that this lack of factual discrimination was a perennial problem for the critical historians of the seventeenth century.

Finally, if any doubt remains that Bayle's use of the critical method was inspired by his defence of toleration, we need only to consider the priority of talents which he considered necessary for the critical historian:

"L'Histoire généralement parlant est ou la plus difficile de toutes les compositions qu'un Auteur puisse entreprendre, ou l'une des plus difficiles. Elle demande un homme qui ait un grand jugement; un style noble, clair & serré; une conscience droite, une probité achevée, beaucoup d'excellens matériaux, & l'art de les bien ranger, & sur toutes choses la force de résister aux instincts du zèle de Religion qui sollicitent à décrier ce qu'on juge faux, & à orner ce qu'on juge véritable."<sup>75</sup>

The stress is obviously placed upon resistance to religious prejudice, which Bayle had elsewhere condemned as the principal source of intolerance and persecution. Any historian who wishes to faithfully discharge his function must shed all desire for satire and flattery, and assume as far as possible "... le plus [esprit] qu'il est possible dans l'état d'un Stoïcien qui n'est agité d'aucune passion."<sup>76</sup> His sole concern must be for the interests of historical truth.

---

75 REMOND, note D.

76 USSON, note F.

While Bayle was able to visualize the perfect image of the objective historian, his acute awareness of the mechanics of psychology forced him to admit that human frailties and weaknesses placed the realization of this image beyond man's achievement:

"Je ne prétens pas qu'il soit facile de composer une Histoire qui représente avec une égale sincérité les fautes & la prudence, le tort & le droit, les pertes & les avantages, des deux partis. Il faudroit être l'Homme sans Passions ou le Sage des Stoïques, cet homme qu'on ne trouvera jamais, & qui ne subsiste qu'en idée ... ."77

Nevertheless it is only by striving for perfection that an historian can acquire prudence, discernment and ultimately the highest level of objectivity humanly possible. Without these characteristics the historian will fall prey to his passions and become a falsifyer of the truth, which when it is obscured, deprives history of any semblance of moral value.

Important as Bayle's critical method was to his defence of toleration, modern historians have placed more stress upon its place in the evolution of seventeenth century historiography. It is true that the seventeenth century was permitted to glimpse in its essentials the basic framework of what we know to-day as the historical method.<sup>78</sup>

Important as this contribution was to the development of historiography, it must be remembered that Bayle himself remained essentially a humanist historian who retained, as Elisabeth Labrousse points out, a vision of

---

77 CAPRIATA, note C.

78 Labrousse, "La méthode critique chez Pierre Bayle et l'histoire", p.465.



history as a literary genre.<sup>79</sup> Even the principles of his method were culled from the writings of other historians. What we too frequently tend to overlook is the fact that Bayle's critical method formed an important part of his attack on religious intolerance, which was a more crucial function than the contribution which it made to the philosophy of history.

---

79 Ibid.

### CONCLUSION

Few thinkers in the history of European thought have been so profoundly misinterpreted by subsequent generations as Pierre Bayle. As Paul Dibon tells us, we must acknowledge that the myth of Bayle the sceptic, Bayle the "philosophe", Bayle "déjà voltairien" is a legacy of the Enlightenment. As the "philosophes" turned the pages of his Dictionnaire, they freely plundered ideas which convinced them that Bayle had anticipated precisely what they were trying to say themselves. Their utopian visions, their anxiety to remould society alerted them to arguments which favoured scepticism or ideas useful to their assault on the authority of both Church and State. They regarded the Dictionnaire as a collection of largely unrelated facts and ideas, without unity and without a common purpose. Its articles could be pillaged without regard to their context in the work as a whole.

Their mistake, however, was to presume that the Dictionnaire lacked any overall unity. Its encyclopaedic form certainly encouraged this idea, but it did have a unifying purpose which clearly dissociated Bayle from all the utopian reformism subsequently preached by the "philosophes". Bayle was no utopian reformer. If anything, he was a propagandist preaching a simple moral: struggle against the human frailties of passion and prejudice and accept the principle of

religious toleration. Far from wishing to remould society, Bayle simply wished to alert Europe to the dangers of a new religious holocaust.

He was a moderate rather than a radical reformer. He conservatively upheld the authority of Louis XIV's monarchical absolutism because he cared more for political stability than for political reform. He stubbornly attacked the prophetic visions of his fellow Huguenot Pierre Jurieu because they threatened to upset the political stability of Europe which was the only sound basis for religious toleration. When he attacked the authority of the Catholic Church, he was not advocating its disestablishment or destruction. He attacked only its claim to infallible orthodoxy from which it claimed the right to persecute Protestants.

If the "philosophes" had recognized the importance of Bayle's defence of toleration to the Dictionnaire, they might have been more cautious of violating its unity by plundering the footnotes of individual articles. They might also have recognized that he drew as much upon history as he did upon philosophy in constructing his defence of toleration. As I have attempted to show in this thesis, Bayle's defence of toleration not only relied upon the assumptions of his traditional seventeenth century humanist idea of history, it also led him to draw new conclusion and to make significant departures

from the humanist tradition. When measured against the purpose of his defence of toleration, the myths and misinterpretations concerning Bayle which were based upon an eighteenth century reading of the Dictionnaire begin to evaporate, and the full significance of his idea of history begins to emerge.

At the foundation of his idea of history lay his firm but pessimistic conviction that man was essentially wicked and unhappy and incapable of any form of moral progress. It was this belief which basically confined his idea of history within the traditional limits of seventeenth century historical thought. He viewed history simply as a repetition of cycles in which mankind experienced neither moral nor material progress. The eighteenth century eventually evolved a belief in progress only when it finally overcame its belief in the doctrine of original sin. For Bayle, however, history confirmed what his Calvinist faith had already taught him to believe: that man was born in sin and without God's grace would always incline towards sin.

Although it was his belief in the doctrine of original sin which determined his pessimistic view of history, his lack of faith in historical progress is also reflected in his attitude to knowledge, particularly to the scientific advances of his own century. When Voltaire observed of him that "il ne savait presque rien en physique",

he was pointing to one of the more obvious limitations in Bayle's historical outlook, for it is true that he showed remarkably little concern for the role of science in the seventeenth century. His lack of faith in the powers of reason caused him to remark "la science enfle", because he regarded scientific knowledge as one of the greatest vanities of man. It seems impossible that he should have been ignorant of the work of men like Newton, Harvey, Gilbert, Hyugens, Boyle, Moore and Halley, but none of these men of science were given mention in the Dictionnaire. He certainly knew of them, but seems to have paid little attention to their work. The limitations of his interest in science probably blinded him to the possibility that the accumulation of scientific knowledge could produce at least material progress for man. Although he acknowledged the superiority of the "modern" author over the "ancient" because of the greater store of knowledge at his disposal, Bayle failed to link this with any possibility for material progress in the world.

If he failed to see any material progress evolving from advances in science, he was at least convinced that man could improve himself, morally speaking, through the study of history. Once again, his view of the purpose of history indicates the debt which his thought owed to the traditions of the seventeenth century. In marked contrast to the eighteenth century, Bayle believed, like the humanist historians of his own age, that history should present clear moral lessons. In his opinion, the most important lesson to be learned from history was the

wisdom of respecting the liberty of each man's conscience. If written objectively and without prejudice, history would always point up the same moral lessons, because its basic pattern was unchanging.

When placed alongside his denial of man's ability to progress morally, this belief in the moral purpose of history would seem to introduce an incongruity into Bayle's theory of history. What was the point of his defence of toleration if it was not to impress men of the need to control their passions and prejudices? What was the value of presenting arguments in defence of toleration if he were convinced that man could not benefit from the moral lessons which they represented? The answer to this apparent inconsistency, as we have seen, is to be found in Bayle's analysis of the origin of evil which is perhaps one of the most original aspects of his thought in the Dictionnaire.

The explanation which Bayle provided for the origin of evil made no departure from the pre-1685 orthodox Calvinist doctrine. When he followed through the reasoning behind the Manichean hypothesis, he was not espousing it as his own belief. It is true that he believed this hypothesis to be rationally invincible, but he used this fact to emphasize the futility of attempting to penetrate the mysteries of religion through the powers of reason. No matter what explanation men presented for the origin of evil, the result was either rationally untenable or led directly to scepticism in religion. His own answer was that we must accept on faith and without question that God confirmed

the evil in man's nature with the original sin, although man was responsible for each subsequent act of evil because of the misuse of his free-will.

It was this emphasis on free-will which provided the justification for Bayle's defence of toleration. Although it would always be in man's nature to be pre-disposed towards evil, individual men were capable of resisting temptation by the correct exercise of their free-will. Just as God implanted the instinct for evil in man's nature, so too He had given him an instinctive awareness of natural morality. Therefore although history was capable of instructing individual men in the wisdom of resisting their passions and vices and of being tolerant, the propensity for evil would always predominate in the nature of mankind as a whole.

Bayle's explanation of the origin of evil is also consistent with this theory of causation in history. He believed that both Providence and man played an equal role in causation. It was not an original theory for it went back at least as far as the writings of Nicòlo Machiavelli two hundred years before, and was quite common in seventeenth century explanation of causation. This only serves to emphasize, once again, Bayle's dependence upon the traditions of his own century. Providence, he believed, exercised a general control over history by controlling the number of influential men in any one age, by regulating the number of revolutions and by manipulating the forces of nature to maintain a balance in history. Man, on the other

hand, played a specific role in causation by exercising his free-will to determine his particular actions. In common with the other historians of the seventeenth century Bayle was preoccupied solely with the activities of the "great" men of history, the kings, princes, prelates, politicians and theorists. Unlike Voltaire, he had no awareness of or interest in social history, and while he gave some emphasis to chance or fortune in causation, he gave no place to any of the vast impersonal social or economic forces which so characterize the causal explanations of twentieth century historiography.

This pre-occupation with the role of the individual in history did lead Bayle to develop some remarkable insights into the whole realm of psychological motivation. In his efforts to understand the reason for man's intolerance to man, he concluded that religious prejudice was more often the effect of undisciplined passions and emotions than of reasoned beliefs. He labelled these irrational factors with the term "témperament" and frequently traced their effects with remarkable sensitivity.

While so much of Bayle's historical outlook was restricted by his seventeenth century preconceptions, there were two areas in which his thinking made significant departures from previous traditions. The first concerns his application of the critical method to historical scholarship. The principles of the method were not original, being culled from the work of many of his contemporaries, but it was largely through the Dictionnaire that they became so popular in the eighteenth



century. The method was designed to enable historians to attain the highest degree of objectivity possible so that history could be freed from all taint of prejudice. The important moral lessons concerning toleration required absolute historical truth, and truth, Bayle believed, was the soul of history. But what was historical truth?

It was through his answer to this question that Bayle produced his second major departure from the traditions of seventeenth century historiography: the complete secularization of history upon which he based his ethical criticism of the Bible. Other thinkers had attempted to sever the umbilical cord which bound history to theology but the inviolability of the Bible as an historical document was always the problem in such an operation. Both Bodin and Lenain de Tillemont tried but without any appreciable success. Bayle sought his answer to the problem not by dividing history into human, natural and divine sections, but by redefining the nature of the term "truth". He advanced a "triple" definition truth, one cord composed of three strands: moral, physical and metaphysical. Absolute moral truth, which he associated with theology, required only the proof of faith; absolute metaphysical truth, which he associated with philosophy, required the unchallengeable proof of reason, while physical truth, which he associated with history required only the apparent existence of facts to be proved. An historian, therefore, who allowed his religious beliefs to influence his view of history would be presenting religious truth at the expense of historical truth, and the moral value

of his historical work would be invalidated. Historical truth was unitary, identifiable and productive of absolute certainty while religious truth was variable, incapable of universal certainty and dependant upon the faith of each individual.

When applied to biblical facts, this definition allowed Bayle to justify an ethical criticism of the Bible. The revealed content of the Bible which constituted those facts for which there was an explicit qualification by the Holy Ghost, was inviolable and must be accepted as true without question. This included such things as the miracles of Christ and Moses, the story of Jonah and the whale, and the creation and fall of man. Facts, however, for which there was no explicit qualification must be submitted to the rigorous tests of historical criticism and be proved by the same criteria which applied to all historical facts. By this means Bayle freed historians from the inhibition of regarding all biblical facts as inviolable and effectively removed the last remaining obstacle to the evolution of a completely secular approach to history.

Clearly then, Bayle was far closer to the "erudites" of his own century than he was to the "philosophes" of the eighteenth century, and he was far more an historian than has generally been recognized. He was never an entirely original thinker, nor were his arguments always as lucid as one might wish. His historical thinking was obviously limited by our standards, even by the standards of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, when read in the light of his defence of toleration, the Dictionnaire historique et critique reveals Bayle to have been, not so much a sceptical philosopher, but a propagandist

historian who in some sense did bridge the gap between seventeenth and eighteenth century historiography.

APPENDIX A

PUBLISHING HISTORY OF THE DICTIONNAIRE

Since the only reasonably complete publishing history of the Dictionnaire is to be found in volume 16 of Beauchot's edition of 1820, I have considered it worthwhile to include here, as an appendix, a complete list of all editions in French and English up to 1830.

French Editions

1. Projet et fragments d'un dictionnaire critique. Rotterdam, R. Leers, 1692. 80, 400p.
2. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Première édition, 2 vols. in 4 parts. Rotterdam, R. Leers, 1697 [?1696]. fol. [On the question of the date of this edition see chap.I, p.8, n.15].
3. Dictionnaire historique et critique, revue, corrigée et augmentée. Deuxième édition, 3 vols. Rotterdam, M.B., 1702.
4. Dictionnaire historique et critique, par M.B. à laquelle on a ajouté la vie de l'auteur & mis ses additions & corrections à leur place. Troisième édition, 3 vols. Rotterdam [Genève] 1715. fol. [This is a pirated version of the 1702 edition with some additions].
5. Dictionnaire historique et critique, par M.B. Troisième édition, [4th. ed.] revue par l'auteur [and edited by P. Marchand]. 4 vols. Rotterdam, M. Böhme, 1720. fol. [Less complete and accurate than later editions].

6. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Quatrième édition [5th. ed.] avec le vie de l'auteur par Mr. Des Maizeaux. 4 vols. Amsterdam & Leyden, P. Brunel [edited by P. Marchand], 1730. fol. [This is the edition used primarily in this thesis].
7. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Cinquième édition [6th. ed.], augmentée de remarques critiques [by l'abbe L.-J. Leclerc]. 5 vols. Amsterdam [Trevoux], 1734. fol.
8. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Cinquième édition [7th. ed.], 4 vols. Basle, J.L. Brandmuller, 1738. fol.
9. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Cinquième édition [8th. ed.], 4 vols. Rotterdam, P. Brunel, 1740. fol. [This is a copy of the 1730 edition with several additions].
10. Dictionnaire historique et critique. [9th. édition], 4 vols. Basle, no publisher, 1741. fol. [A poorly executed edition].
11. Dictionnaire historique et critique. [10th. édition], 8 parts. Leipzig, P. Phil. Wolf, 1801-1804. 8°. [This is a poorly executed and uncomplete edition which ends, in the eighth part, with the article HOORNBECK].
12. Dictionnaire historique et critique de P.B. Nouvelle édition, augmentée de notes extraites de Chauffepié, Joly, La Monnoie, Leduchat, L.-J. Leclerc, Prosper Marchand, etc., publiée par A. -J. -Q. [Beuchot]. Onzième édition, 16 vols. Paris, Desoer, 1820-24. 8°.

13. Dictionnaire historique et critique. Douzième édition.  
Paris, C. -V. Duriez, 1830. 8°.
14. Nouveau dictionnaire historique et critique, pour servir de  
supplément au Dictionnaire historique et critique de M. Pierre  
Bayle. par Jacques Georges de Chauffepié. 4 vols. Amsterdam,  
La Haye et Leyden, Z. Chatelin, 1750-56. fol.
15. Extraits du Dictionnaire historique et critique de B. [by  
Frederick II]. 2 vols. Berlin, 1765. 8°.
16. Extraits du Dictionnaire historique et critique. Nouvelle édition,  
augmentée. 2 vols. Amsterdam, 1780. 8°.

#### English Editions

There were several complete English translations of the Dictionnaire during the eighteenth century, but none of these was entirely reliable.

1. An Historical and Critical Dictionary. 4 vols. London,  
B. Harper, etc., 1710. fol. [Translation of the 1702 French  
edition].
2. Historical and Critical Dictionary. 5 vols. London, J.J. &  
P. Knapton, etc., 1734-38. fol. [A translation collated from  
the various French editions up to 1730 and undertaken by a  
group of Huguenot refugees in England. Readily available, but  
not a reliably accurate translation].
3. General Dictionary, Historical and Critical: in which a new and  
accurate translation of that of Mr. Bayle is included by

J. P. Bernard, Thomas Birch and John Lockman. 10 vols. London,  
1734-41. fol.

---

LIST OF CITED ARTICLES FROM THE DICTIONNAIRE

Abdas:	Beaulieu:
Abel:	Bertelier:
Abimélech:	Bèze:
Achillea:	Blondel, (David):
Adam, (First man):	Blondel, (François ii):
Agésilas II:	Bodin:
Ailli:	Bourgogne, (Philippe de):
Alciat, (Jean Paul):	Braunbom:
Alexander ab Alexandro:	Brenzius:
Alpaïde:	Brossier:
Alting, (Henri):	Brutus, (Marc Junius):
Amyraut:	
Amphiarus:	Cappadoce:
Anaxagorus:	Capriata:
Andromaque:	Charron:
Aristide:	Chigi, (Fabio):
Arnauld, (Antoine le grand):	Commandin:
Arnisaesus:	Concini:
Autriche, (Don Juan d'):	Constance:
Averroës:	Corceone:
Barclai, (Guillaume):	Damascene:
Barcochebas:	David, (Original article):
Barlow:	David, (Revised article):
Basta, (George):	Domitia:
Baudius:	Drusus, (Marc Livius):
Beaucaire:	



Edouard IV:	Knox:
Elie:	Kuchlin, (Jean):
Elisabeth:	
Elisée:	Lamech:
Emma:	Launoi, (Jean de):
Epicture:	Louis XI:
Eppendorf:	Louis XIII:
Erasme:	Loyola:
Esechiel:	Luther:
Esope:	
Euclide:	Mâcon:
	Mahomet:
Farel:	Mahomet II:
François I <sup>er</sup> :	Maldonat, (Jean Jesuite):
	Manichéens:
Gardie:	Marcionites:
Geldenhaur:	Marillac, (Charles de):
Grégoire I <sup>er</sup> :	Marillac, (Louis de):
Grégoire VII:	Milton:
Grotius, (Hugo):	Mucie:
Guevara:	
Guise, (François de):	Naogeorgus:
Guise, (Louis de):	Naples, (Alphonse I <sup>er</sup> de):
	Naples, (Jeanne I de):
Henri II:	Navarre, (Marguerite de, fille
Hipparchia:	d'Henri II):
Hobbes:	Nestorius:
Hospital, (Michael de l'):	Nicolle:
	Niphus, (Augustin):
Japon:	
Jonas, (le prophète):	Origène:
Judith:	
Junius, (François i):	

Panormita:

Papesse:

Pauliciens:

Pellisson:

Périclès:

Perrot, (Nicholas):

Phasis:

Plotin:

Pyrrhon:

Puccius:

Raphelengius:

Raynaud:

Remond:

Rorarius:

Rufin:

Samblançai, (Guillaume de Beaune):

Sara:

Spinoza:

Synergistes:

Timée:

Timoléon:

Tuppius:

Usson:

Vayer, (la Mothe le):

Vergerius:

Virgile:

Vorstius, (Conrad):

Xénophanes:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. PRIMARY SOURCES

- BAYLE, Pierre, Dictionnaire historique et critique. Première édition, 2 vols. in 4 parts. Rotterdam, R. Leers, 1697 [?1696]. fol.
- , Dictionnaire historique et critique. Quatrième édition [5th. ed.] avec la vie d'auteur par Mr. Des. Maizeaux. 4 vols. Amsterdam & Leide, P. Brunel [edited by P. Marchand], 1730. fol.
- , Oeuvres diverses. Deuxième édition, 4 vols. La Haye [Trevoux], Par la Compagnie de Libraires, 1737. fol.
- , Oeuvres diverses. 4 vols. edited by Elisabeth Labrousse. Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965-68. [a photo-reproduction of the 1727 edition].
- CHAUFFEPIE, Jacques Georges de, Nouveau dictionnaire historique et critique, pour servir de supplement au Dictionnaire historique et critique de M. Pierre Bayle. 4 vols. Amsterdam, La Haye & Leide, Z. Chatelin, 1750-56. fol.
- MORERI, Louis, Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique ou le Mélange Curieux, Sacrée et Profane. Seconde édition, 2 vols. Lyon, Parayre, 1681. fol.
- , The Great Historical, Geographical and Poetical Dictionary. Sixth edition, 2 vols. London, for Henry Rhodes, Luke Meredith, John Harris and Thomas Newborough, 1694. fol.

## 2. SECONDARY SOURCES

### (i) General

ADAM, Antoine, Histoire de la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle.

tome V, "La fin de l'Ecole classique, 1680-1715". Paris, Editions Mondiales, 1962.

BARBER, W. H., Leibniz in France from Arnauld to Voltaire. A Study in French Reactions to Leibnizianism, 1670-1760. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955.

BARNES, Annie, Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736) et la république des lettres. Paris. Droz, 1938.

BECKER, Carl, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers. (Yale Paperbound), New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961.

BLACK, J. B., The Art of History: A Study of Four Great Historians of the Eighteenth Century. London, Methuen, 1926.

BREHIER, Emile, The History of Philosophy: The Seventeenth Century. Translated by Wade Baskin. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1966.

BROOKS, Richard A., Voltaire and Leibniz. Genève, Droz, 1964.

BRUMFITT, J. H., Voltaire: Historian. London, O.U.P., 1958.

BURY, J. B., The Idea of Progress. London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1928.

BUTTERFIELD, Herbert, The Origins of Modern Science. 2nd. ed. London, G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1962.

CAPON, Alexander, Pierre Jurieu: his political ideas and activities. Unpublished thesis, University of London, 1940.

- CASSIRER, Ernst, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment. Translated by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1951.
- CIORANESCU, Alexandre, Bibliographie de la littérature française du dix-septième siècle. 3 vols. Paris, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1966, tome I.
- COATES, W. H. et al., The Emergence of Liberal Humanism. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966.
- COBBAN, Alfred, In Search of Humanity. London, Jonathan Cape, 1960.
- CROCKER, Lester G., An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth-Century French Thought. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959.
- EHRARD, Jean, L'idée de nature en France dans la première moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. 2 tomes. Paris, S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963.
- GIBBON, Edward, Miscellaneous Works. 5 vols. London, John Murray, 1814, vol. V.
- HAZARD, Paul, La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680-1715. [1935] Paris, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- KAMEN, Henry, The Rise of Toleration. (World University Library), 1967. London, Weidenfield & Nicolson.
- LASKI, Harold, The Rise of European Liberalism: An Essay in Interpretation. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936.
- LECLER, Joseph, Toleration and the Reformation. Translated by T. L. Westow, 2 vols. New York and London, Associated Press and Longmans, 1960.

- LEYDEN, William von, "Antiquity and Authority: a Paradox in the Renaissance Theory of History", in Journal of the History of Ideas, XIX, 1958, 4, 473-492.
- MACHIAVELLI, Nicolò, The Prince and Other Pieces, based on the English translation of 1674. London, George Routledge & Sons, 1883.
- MARTIN, Kingsley, French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century. 2nd. ed. London, Turnstile Press, 1954.
- NOBBS, Douglas, Theocracy and Toleration: A Study of the Disputes in Dutch Calvinism from 1600 to 1650 .... Cambridge, University Press, 1938.
- RUNCIMAN, Steven, The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy. Cambridge, University Press, 1947.
- STANKIEWICZ, W. J., Politics and Religion in Seventeenth-Century France. A Study of Political Ideas from the Monarchomachs to Bayle, as reflected in the Toleration Controversy. Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1960.
- STROMBERG, R. N., "History in the Eighteenth Century, in Journal of the History of Ideas, XII, 1951, 2, 295-304.
- TILLEY, Arthur A., The Decline of the Age of Louis XIV, or, French Literature, 1687-1715. Cambridge, University Press, 1929.
- VYVERBERG, Henry, Historical Pessimism in the French Enlightenment. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1958.
- WENDEL, François, Calvin. (Fontana Paperback), London, Collins, 1956.

(ii) Particular

ANDRE, Paul, La Jeunesse de Bayle: Tribun de la Tolérance. Genève, Editions générales, 1953.

BALDENSBERGER, Fernand, "Intellectuels français hors de France. I. De Descartes à Voltaire: viii. Les intellectuels du Refuge huguenot; ix. Les 'Nouvellistes' de Hollande: Sainte-Hyacinthe et Bayle", in Revue des Cours et Conférences, XXXIV, 1933-34, nos. 11 & 12, 215-31 and 329-40.

BARBER, W. H., "Pierre Bayle: Faith and Reason", in The French Mind. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952.

BARROUX, R., "Le Dictionnaire historique et critique", in Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises (publié sous la direction du Cardinal Georges Grente), Le Dix-Huitième siècle, Paris, Fayard, 1960. I, 150-52.

BELLER, E. A. & LEE, M. du P., Selections from Bayle's Dictionary. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1952.

BERGERON, Henri-F., "Le manichéisme de Bayle et Plutarque", in XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, 68, 1965, 44-49.

BRACKEN, Harry M., "Bayle not a Sceptic?", in Journal of the History of Ideas, 25, 2, 169-180.

BRUNETIERE, Ferdinand, "La critique de Bayle", in Etudes critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature française, 5<sup>e</sup> série, 1<sup>ère</sup> éd. Paris, 1893, 111-182.

BRUSH, Craig B., Montaigne and Bayle: Variations on the Theme of Skepticism. ("Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées"), The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

- CARNUS, Juliette, "The Cosmological System of Pierre Bayle", in Philosophy of Science, VIII, 1941, 585-97.
- CAZES, Albert, Pierre Bayle, sa vie, ses idées, son influence, son oeuvre. Paris, Dujarric et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1905.
- CHAIX-RUIY, J., "La philosophie de Pierre Bayle: scepticisme, criticisme ou fidéisme?", in Giornale di Metafisica, II, 6, 1947, 517-27.
- CONSTANTINESCU-BAGDAT, Elise, Etudes d'histoire pacifiste, III, "Bayle (1647-1706)". Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1928.
- COURTINES, Leo Pierre, Bayle's Relations with England and the English. New York, Columbia University Press, 1938.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Spain and Portugal in Bayle's Dictionnaire", in Hispania (Stanford), XXIV, 1941, 409-15.
- CUMMINS, Phillip Daniel, Pierre Bayle's critique of matter and its impact on modern philosophy. Doctoral Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1961.
- DELVOLVE, Jean, Religion, critique et philosophie positive chez Pierre Bayle. Paris, Alcan, 1906.
- DESCHAMPS, Arsene, La genèse du scepticisme érudit chez Bayle. Liège, Vaillant-Carmanne, 1878.
- DIBON, Paul, Pierre Bayle, le Philosophe de Rotterdam, études et documents. Amsterdam and Paris, Elsevier & Vrin, 1959.
- vii-xvii: Paul Dibon, "Redécouverte de Bayle".
- 1-19: R. H. Popkin, "Bayle's Place in XVIIth Century Scepticism".
- 20-47: H. C. Hazewinkel, "Pierre Bayle à Rotterdam".



- 48-65: A. Robinet, "L'aphilosophie de P. Bayle devant les philosophies de Malebranche et Leibniz".
- 66-80: L. Kolakowsky, "Pierre Bayle, critique de la Métaphysique spinoziste de la substance".
- 81-96: P. J. S. Whitmore, "Bayle's criticism of Locke".
- 97-141: E. Labrousse, "Les coulisses du Journal de Bayle".
- 142-49: R. Shackleton, "Bayle and Montesquieu".
- 150-95: C. L. Thijssen-Schoute, "La diffusion européenne des idées de Bayle".
- 196-215: E. Haase, "Un épilogue à la controverse Jurieu-Bayle".
- 216-28: R. H. Popkin, "An unpublished letter of Pierre Bayle to Pierre Jurieu".
- 219-37: E. Labrousse, "Documents relatifs à l'offre d'une chaire de Philosophie à Bayle à l'Université de Franeker ...".
- DODGE, Guy Howard, The Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Dispersion with special reference to the thought and influence of Pierre Jurieu. New York, Columbia University Press, 1947.
- DREYFOUS, Michel, "Bayle et l'histoire religieuse", in Mélanges de la Société toulousaine d'Etudes classique, 2, 1946, 223-41.
- DUBOIS, Lucien, Bayle et la tolérance. Paris, 1902.
- EDWARDS, Paul. (ed.), The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. 8 vols. New York, Macmillan Co. & Free Press; London, Collier-Macmillan, 1967. I, "Pierre Bayle" by R. H. Popkin, 257-60.

EUKEN, R. C., "Bayle and Kant", in Collected Essays of Rudolph Eucken, edited and translated by Meyrick Booth. London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1914, 269-302.

FAGUET, Emile, Dix-huitième siècle: études littéraires. "Pierre Bayle", 1-30. Paris, Boivin & C<sup>ie</sup>, no date.

GOOCH, G. P., French Profiles. London, Longmans, 1961.

GOUHIER, H., "Les philosophes du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle devant l'histoire de la philosophie", in XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, 54-55, 1962, 5-16.

HAXO, Henry H., "Pierre Bayle and his literary taste", in Publications of the Modern Language Association, XXXVIII, 4, 1923, 823-58.

HUSE, Birger, "Pierre Bayle et l'idée de tolérance religieuse", in Cahiers de Bruges, II, 1, mars 1952, 23-24.

JAMES, E. D., "Scepticism and Fideism in Bayle's Dictionnaire", in French Studies, XVI, 4, Oct. 1962, 307-23.

JEANMAIRE, Emile, Essai sur la critique religieuse de Pierre Bayle.

Thèse présentée à la Faculté de Théologie protestante de Strasbourg pour obtenir le grade de Bachelier en Théologie: Université de France: Faculté de Théologie protestante de Strasbourg. Strasbourg, 1862.

JOLY, Robert, "La tolérance religieuse", in Cahiers rationalistes, 173, septembre-octobre 1958, 208-46.

———, "Pierre Bayle et la tolérance", in Marche Romane, (Liège), IV, 3, juillet-septembre 1954, 71-84.

LABROUSSE, Elisabeth, Inventaire critique de la correspondance de Pierre Bayle. Paris, Librairie philosophique, J. Vrin, 1961.

———, "La méthode critique chez Pierre Bayle et l'histoire", in Revue Internationale de Philosophie, XI, 4, no. 42, 1957, 450-66.

———, "Obscurantisme et lumière chez Pierre Bayle", in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, XXVI, 1963. 1037-48.

———, Pierre Bayle. 2 vols. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963-64. ("Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées").

Tome I: Du pays de Foix à la cité d'Erasme.

Tome II: Hétérodoxie et rigorisme.

———, Pierre Bayle et l'instrument critique: Présentation, choix de textes, bibliographie par E.L. (Editions Seghers), Vienne, Presses d'Aubin Ligugé, 1965.

LACOSTE, Edmond, Bayle novelliste et critique littéraire. Paris, Picart, 1929.

LATIMER, C.T., The Influence of Bayle's Dictionary on the Theological Articles in Voltaire's Dictionnaire Philosophique. Doctoral Thesis, University of Chicago, 1920.

MANCEAU, Henri, "Sedan. Quand Pierre Bayle aiguïsait les armes de la critique", in Les Lettres Françaises, 6-12 septembre 1956, no. 635, 10.

MASON, Hadyn T., Pierre Bayle and Voltaire. London, O.U.P., 1963.

———, "Pierre Bayle's Religious Views", in French Studies, XVII, 3, July 1963, 205-17.

NATZIO, Catherine, The Penetration of English Ideas into France, 1680-1720, with a special reference to Pierre Bayle. Doctoral Thesis, Oxford (Lady Margaret Hall), 1929.

NEDERGAARD, Leif, "La genèse du Dictionnaire historique et critique de Pierre Bayle", in Orbis Litterarum, XIII, 1958, 210-27.

NORTON, David, "Leibniz and Bayle: Manicheism and Dialectic", in Journal of the History of Philosophy, II, 1964, 23-26.

ORTON, Betty Jean, Pierre Bayle et le mouvement des idées dans la presse periodique a la fin du 17<sup>e</sup> siècle. Doctoral Thesis, University of Leeds, 1953.

OSBORN, James Marshall, "Thomas Birch and the General Dictionary, 1734-1741", in Modern Philology, XXXVI, 1, August 1938, 25-46.

POPKIN, Richard H., "Bayle and Hume", in Transactions of the XIIIth International Congress of Philosophy, (Mexico City) Sept., 1963.

———, "Berkeley and Pyrrhonism", in Review of Metaphysics, V, 1951-52, 223-46.

———, "The High Road to Pyrrhonism", in American Philosophical Quarterly, II, 1965, 1-15.

———, Pierre Bayle: Historical and Critical Dictionary.

Selections with an introduction and notes by R. H. Popkin and C. Brush. (Library of Liberal Arts), Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

———, The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes. Assen, van Gorcum, 1960.

———, "Kierkegaard and Scepticism", in Algemeen Tydschrift voor Wysbegeerte en Psychologie, LI, 1959, 123-41.

———, "Scepticism in the Enlightenment", in Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, XXVI, 1963, 1321-45.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Sceptical Precursors of David Hume", in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XVI, 1955, 61-71.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Theological and Religious Scepticism", in Christian Scholar, XXXIX, 1956, 150-58.

RAYMOND, M., Pierre Bayle. Choix de textes et introduction. Paris, Egloff, 1948.

REX, Walter, Essays on Pierre Bayle and Religious Controversy. ("Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées"), The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1965. [Originally published in two parts in Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, XXIV, 1, 1952, 168-89 and XXV, 2, 1963, 366-403.].

ROBINSON, Howard, "Bayle's Profanation of Sacred History", in Essays in Intellectual History, dedicated to James Harvey Robinson by his former Seminar students. New York, Harper, 1929.

\_\_\_\_\_, Bayle the Sceptic. New York, Columbia University Press, 1931.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Great Comet of 1680: An Episode in the History of Rationalism. Northfield, Minn., Columbia University Press, 1916.

SAINTE-BAUVE, Oeuvres de Sainte-Beuve. Paris, Librairie Gallimard, 1949.

I. Portraits littéraires, "Du génie critique et de Bayle", 364-88.

SANDBERG, Karl Christian, Faith and Reason in the Thought of Pierre Bayle, 1670-1697. Doctoral Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1961.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Great Contest of Faith and Reason: Selections from the Writings of Pierre Bayle. Translated and edited by Karl C. Sandberg. New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. Inc., 1963.

- , "Pierre Bayle's Sincerity in his Views on Faith and Reason", in Studies on Philology, LXI, 1964, 74-84.
- SARTON, George, "Boyle and Bayle: the sceptical chemist and the sceptical historian", in Chymia, Annual Studies in the History of Chemistry (Philadelphia), III, 1950, 155-89.
- SEE, Henri, Les idées politiques en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Paris, Marcel Giard, 1923.
- SERRURIER, C., Pierre Bayle en Hollande, étude historique et critique. Lausanne, Imprimerie co-operative la concorde, 1912.
- SMITH, Horatio E., The Literary Criticism of Pierre Bayle. (Doctoral Thesis, Johns Hopkins University), Albany N.Y., The Brandow Printing co., 1912.
- STEPHEN, Sir James Fitzjames, "The Scepticism of Bayle", in Horae Sabbaticae, (reprint of articles contributed to the Saturday Review), London, 1892. Vol. II, 174-92.
- UNIVERSITE DE STRASBOURG, Religion, Erudition et Critique à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup>. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.
- 1-20: Badouin de Gaiffier, "Hagiographie et critique. Quelques aspects de l'oeuvre des bollandistes au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle".
- 21-32: Bruni Neveu, "Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont (1637-1698) et l'érudition ecclésiastique de son temps".
- 33-52: René Voeltzel, "Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736) et la critique biblique".

53-70: Elisabeth Labrousse, "Le paradoxe de l'érudit cartésien Pierre Bayle".

71-118: Jacques Solé, "Religion et méthode critique dans le Dictionnaire de Bayle".

119-200: Jacques Solé, "Religion et vision historiographique dans le Dictionnaire de Bayle".

201-14: Paul Auvray, "Richard Simon et Spinoza".

215-31: Roger Zuber, "Frémont d'Ablencourt et les causes finales: sa réplique à Spinoza".

VANCOURT, Raymond, "La religion de Bayle", in Critique, Octobre 1960, 879-92.

WEIL, Erik, "Pierre Bayle", in Critique, V, 1949, 656-61.

WHITMORE, P.J.S., "English Thought and Learning in the Works of Pierre Bayle", in French Studies, 8, 1954, 141-48.

———, The Use Made of English Thought and History in the Works of Pierre Bayle, with a special reference to the Dictionnaire.

Doctoral Thesis, University of London, 1952.